The Massachusetts Charter School Initiative

A Report of the Massachusetts Department of Education

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David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

May 2001

Dear Friends:

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993—an ambitious and sustained commitment to improving student learning—included among its provisions the creation of a small number of new, independent public schools: charter schools. The purpose of these new schools is to increase student achievement, offer parents more choices, develop innovative school models, and be held accountable for results.

As of the 2000-01 school year, 35 Commonwealth and five Horace Mann charters enroll nearly 15,000 students from over 180 districts in grades Kindergarten to 12. In its brief history, the Massachusetts charter school initiative has gained national recognition for its innovation, strict accountability, commitment to high academic standards, as well as for the enthusiasm and support the schools have received from families.

As required by law, all charter schools that have been open for one year or more complete an annual report that describes their record for the previous year. The Massachusetts Charter School Initiative Report provides a brief summary of those annual reports, supplemented with information from documentattion required of all public schools, including charter schools, by the Massachusetts Department of Education. In addition, the Massachusetts Charter School Initiative Report provides an analysis of the challenges and lessons that have been learned in Massachusetts since the initiative began

I would like to acknowledge the work of Susan Miller Barker, Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools, and the other Department staff who created this report. The pages that follow tell the story of what has been accomplished by hundreds of teachers, parents, and others who have worked hard to turn their dreams into reality. Charter schools are still young and are one of many important reform efforts underway, and I am pleased to offer this report for all who are interested in their progress. My intention is to help all public schools succeed, and part of this will depend on how well we can share "best practices" among all of our schools.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

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1 Questions and Answers

River Valley Charter School

What is a Commonwealth charter school?

A Commonwealth charter school is a Massachusetts public school that operates independent of any school committee under a five-year charter granted by the Board of Education. As of March 2001, 41 groups held Commonwealth charters in Massachusetts.

What is a Horace Mann charter school?

A Horace Mann charter school is a Massachusetts public school that operates under a five-year charter approved by the local school committee, the local teacher's union president, and the Board of Education. As of March 2001, seven groups held Horace Mann charters in Massachusetts.

What is the purpose of the charter school initiative in Massachusetts?

The charter school initiative was established to provide more choices in public education, to encourage competition among public schools, and to spur innovation in pursuit of improved educational outcomes. The regulations governing charter schools give seven official purposes for these schools:

1. to stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education;
2. to provide opportunities for innovative learning and assessments;
3. to provide parents and students with greater options in choosing schools within and outside their school districts;
4. to provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management;
5. to encourage performance-based educational programs;
6. to hold teachers and school administrators accountable for students' educational outcomes; and
7. to provide models for replication in other public schools.

More detailed answers to these and other questions can be found throughout this book.

How are charter schools different from district public schools?

The main difference has to do with freedom and accountability. Most charter school leaders, unlike many of their district counterparts, are free to decide how all of the schools funds are spent and to hire faculty and staff that they believe are best qualified and suited for the job. Charter schools have the freedom to control their budgets, staffing, school design, schedule, and other resources. Because of this freedom they have the opportunity to create a coherent program designed specifically to execute the school's academic mission. In return for this freedom, a charter school must attract students and produce results within five years or have its charter revoked.

How are charter schools held accountable?

Because charter schools have a greater measure of autonomy than district public schools, charter schools are also held to a more rigorous level of accountability. Every charter school must be able to answer three questions in order to have its charter renewed:

1. *Is the academic program a success?*
2. *Is the school a viable organization?*
3. *Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?*

Charter schools must demonstrate performance on both external and internal measures. Each school must submit an accountability plan to the state, report progress annually, host a number of on-site visits from the Department of Education, and undergo a thorough renewal inspection, before the Board of Education determines whether the school merits renewal of its charter for another five years.

Do the standards that apply to other public schools apply to charters?

Yes. In addition to the rigorous accountability standards discussed above, all charter schools are held to the same standards as public schools in

assuring the health and safety of students, furnishing necessary support to meet the needs of special education students, and in testing their students using the state's comprehensive assessment system (MCAS). In addition, every charter school is subject to an annual financial audit, and every charter school, like every school district, is required to hear and respond to complaints from parents. Commonwealth charter schools operate without the constraints of local school district rules. Horace Mann schools, depending on the terms of their charters, may also be free from some local school district rules and some provisions of the local collective bargaining agreement and regulations.

Who can apply for a charter? What is the application process?

The process of applying for a charter is designed to be manageable and feasible for grassroots groups with limited resources. At the same time, the process is rigorous in order to ensure that only those that are up to the task of running a school are approved. The application includes the school's mission statement, academic standards, educational program, performance standards, assessment system, statement of need, evidence of capacity to operate, and description of the school's leadership and governance. Before they can be approved, applicants must submit a prospectus and application, participate in an interview by the Charter School Office, respond to questions in a public hearing, and be evaluated by a review panel assembled by the Department of Education.

On what grounds does the Board of Education deny a charter application?

Applications that do not meet the criteria listed in the application are denied. Examples of elements that would constitute failure as measured against these criteria are: vague, muddled, or jargon-filled applications; discriminatory procedures or intentions; weak or scant evidence that there is demand for the school; lack of commitment to accountability; a school design or education program that is commonplace; founders without the

necessary experience, resources, or wherewithal to start a school; and, weak or scant evidence that a charter is needed in order for the program to exist or succeed.

Is there any limit to the number of charters that can be approved?

The Board of Education is limited in the number of charters it can grant by law. Currently, state law allows up to 120 charters to be granted in Massachusetts, including no more than 72 Commonwealth and 48 Horace Mann charters. As of March 2001, there are 41 Commonwealth and seven Horace Mann charters held by groups in the state.

Is there any limit to the number of charter schools that can be established in a given city or town?

No. However, there is a limit to how much of a school district's budget can go to Commonwealth charter schools. Under the law, no school district's total charter school tuition payment to Commonwealth charter schools can exceed nine percent of that district's net school spending.

How much demand is there for enrollment in charter schools?

Parent demand for charter school enrollment in Massachusetts is extremely high. The best measure of that demand is the number of applications these schools receive for each opening they have available. On average, in the 1999-2000 school year, schools received three applications for every opening. At some schools there were as many as 15 or 30 applications for every open spot. These schools were often the ones that had been in operation the longest. This would indicate that as schools develop a reputation and as parents gain experience with charter schools, those schools are becoming even more popular.

More detailed answers to these and other questions can be found throughout this book.

Who may enroll in charter schools?

Charter schools are public schools and, as such, are open to all students to whom other Massachusetts public schools are open. Like all public schools, charter schools may not discriminate in admission. Schools may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or ancestry, nor may they discriminate on the basis of a student's mental or physical ability, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

What student populations are charter schools serving?

Demographic data shows that charter schools in Massachusetts are more likely to open in urban areas than suburban or rural areas. In addition, they tend to serve a greater proportion of low-income students and minority students—particularly black and Latino students—than the public school system as a whole. For more detail, see chapter five.

May charter schools give applicants an entrance exam?

No. State law prohibits a charter school from discriminating in its enrollment process on the basis of academic achievement. Schools may create eligibility thresholds for enrollment that are consistent with their areas of focus or grade levels, but a school's methods for determining eligibility for enrollment—including meetings, interviews, and recommendations—cannot be designed, intended, or used to discriminate on the basis of a child's knowledge or skills. For instance, a charter high school may deny admission to students who have not completed the eighth grade, but it cannot deny admission to students on the basis of their inability to do eighth-grade level work. Diagnostic exams may be given once students have been enrolled.

Do charter schools serve children with special needs?

Yes. Charter schools may not discriminate on the basis of students' special needs and must comply with the same state and federal laws regarding the provision of special education services as do all public schools. By statute, charter schools do not enroll students whose Individual Education Plans (IEPs) call for out-of-school placement. They do, however, provide special services to many children with IEPs as well as to many students who do not have IEPs. Counting only students who have IEPs, about nine percent of students in charter schools are special education, compared to seventeen percent of all public schools in Massachusetts.

How is charter school funding different from that of other public schools?

Charter schools receive their funding primarily from three sources: student tuition paid by the government, government grants, and private fundraising. The key difference between funding for charter schools and funding for other public schools is the way in which public tuition is appropriated. While other public schools receive a set amount of funding from the school district, charter schools receive funding calculated to directly reflect the number of students enrolled at the school. For Commonwealth charter schools, tuition payments from the state are calculated based on the average per pupil tuition from the districts in which its students reside. For Horace Mann charter schools, tuition is paid by the school district in which the school is located, and is negotiated independently by that school's Board of Trustees and the district's superintendent. Under law, a Horace Mann charter school cannot receive less than it would have under the district's standard budgetary allocation rules.

What role does private fundraising play in charter school financing?

Charter schools, like all public schools, are able to turn to private contributors such as parents, local businesses, or foundations to provide private support for their program. For many schools, private fundraising is a negligible part of the school's budget. However, a handful of schools report noteworthy success in fundraising with some schools reporting more than $200,000 in fundraising in the 1999-2000 school year.

What are some of the key challenges that face charter schools?

A review of the last five years of the charter school initiative in Massachusetts reveals that charter schools tend to face six key challenges. Their success in facing these challenges is often a determinant of their overall success. These challenges are: the implementation of useful systems of accountability, the development of sound governance, financing of school facilities, the creation or contracting of effective school management services, the role of services for students with special needs in the overall academic programs, and the replication of model practices. Perhaps the single greatest of these challenges is a lack of access to capital for the acquisition, expansion, or improvement of school facilities. Charter schools have particular difficulty acquiring the funds necessary for school facilities because they are startup organizations with no credit history and must make due with the same amount of funding used by district schools that already own their facilities.

Who is evaluating charter schools?

Charter schools are among the most scrutinized schools in Massachusetts. Formal evaluation is performed by the Massachusetts Department of Education. At least six other governmental entities have audited, investigated, and studied charter schools. Other organizations—including the federal government, national research organizations and

Massachusetts think tanks—are also collecting information and evaluating charter schools.

How are charter schools performing academically?

In Massachusetts, a preliminary study of charter schools showed that these schools generally performed as well as their district counterparts on standardized tests, and tended to enroll children who had been performing below average in their previous schools. A review of class scores on tests reported by 31 schools in the 1999-2000 school year shows 64 percent of classes making greater than average gains in math scores, 58 percent making greater than average gains in reading scores, and 63 percent making greater than average gains in overall scores.

How does the Commonwealth decide whether to renew a school's charter?

In order to have its charter renewed, a charter school submits an extensive renewal application. Following receipt of a renewal application, the Commissioner of Education appoints an independent evaluation team to conduct a thorough site visit based on the British school inspection model. Based on the renewal inspection as well as a review of the school's past annual reports, financial audits, and site visit reports, the Commissioner makes a recommendation to the Board of Education for renewal or revocation of the school's charter.

2 The Charter Concept

Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School

What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are independent public schools. Like all public schools, they are responsible for educating all children, free of charge, and without discrimination. Unlike most public schools, they have the independence to control their own resources, shape their own mission, and make their own staffing decisions.

In return for the independence they are granted, Massachusetts charter schools must attract enough students to remain in operation and must produce results that merit renewal of their charter every five years.

Charter schools are started by parents, teachers, social service organizations, and community leaders. They are in cities and rural villages from Barnstable to Worcester. They use instructional techniques from Core Knowledge to Essential Questions. Their curricula include everything from math and science to community service, jazz bands, and exhibitions.

In return for the independence they are granted, charter schools must attract enough students to remain in operation, and must produce results that merit renewal of their charter every five years.

Despite these many differences, charter schools all share one similarity. Every charter school is held to the same basic standard as all public schools: to provide children with the education to achieve.

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Why Charter Schools?

Charter schools were created to provide more choices in public education, encourage competition among public schools, and spur innovation in pursuit of improved educational outcomes. The first state in the United States to allow charter schools was Minnesota, which passed its charter school law in 1991. Two years later, Massachusetts became the fourth state to bring charter schools to its residents with the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1993. By the end of 2000, 36 states had passed some version of a charter school law, and over two thousand charter schools were operating nationwide.

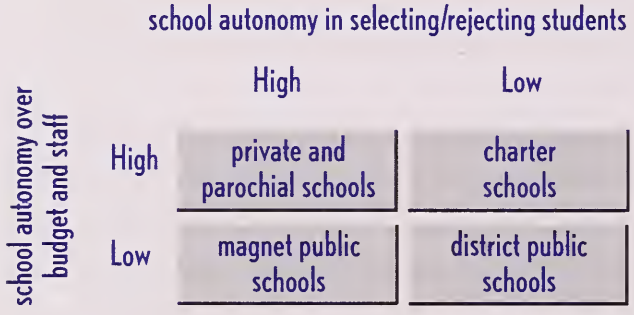
The idea for independent "chartered" public schools grew largely out of two historical forces. One was the frustration many education reformers felt with reform efforts in the 1980s. After the 1983 report "A Nation at Risk" drew dramatic attention to the failings of American public schools, a variety of new education reform efforts arose across the country. While some of these succeeded and others failed, efforts that addressed only one piece of the complex puzzle of childhood education were often eclipsed by scores of other pieces that remained unchanged. Rather than tinker with individual elements of a school, many reformers concluded that one of the best ways to create an effective school is to start from scratch and change everything at once.

Charter schools introduced the notion that schools can use a variety of different management systems and curricular philosophies and still be considered public as long as they bear one fundamental similarity: they are open to all children equally and without charge. At its base, this is what it means to be a public school.

The other historical force at work was a period of watershed change in the American economy that brought with it a need to rethink schooling itself. Traditional public schools, founded to reflect the needs of our nation's old industrial economy, were constructed on a factory model: built in large buildings with tight class schedules, and standardized systems and curricula. Charter schools, on the other hand, are founded to reflect the realities of a modern, information-age economy: an economy in which organizations are

built not around assembly lines but around missions, in which horizontal management is favored over centralization, in which difference and diversity are recognized as central to innovation.

Control over Decision-Making at Charter and Other Schools



One way of putting the difference between charter and other schools in perspective is by comparing schools' control over two key inputs: the students who go there, and the use of staff and resources to educate them. As shown in the right column, charter schools must be open to all students who apply. As shown in the top row, charter schools are granted significant control over how they use staff and resources to teach that student body. This unique combination sets charter schools apart.

Before the introduction of charter schools, it was assumed that in order to be a "public school," all of these schools had to use essentially the same structures and management systems. Charter schools introduced the notion that schools can use a variety of different management systems and curricular philosophies and still be considered public as long as they bear one fundamental similarity: they are open to all children equally and without charge. At its base, this is what it means to be a public school.

The standard of education open to all children must remain unwavering for all public schools. The standardization that sometimes comes with top-down management, on the other hand, need not. Many people—professionals and laypeople alike—have the creativity, skills, and desire to create better schools. Charter schools offer the exciting opportunity for them to do so.

Freedom

Charter schools have the freedom to be different from one another and from other public schools. Most importantly, they have the freedom to focus on achieving a singular, unifying vision for education.

In charter schools across Massachusetts, this freedom for schools as a whole has translated into healthy freedom for school staff. More than other public school teachers, charter school teachers report that "academic freedom" is the most important aspect of their professional work, according to a 1998 study by the Center for the Advancement of Public Education. In charter schools like Cape Cod Lighthouse and City on a Hill, teachers have been involved in everything from designing the curriculum to defining the school mission to creating the schools themselves.

Charter schools are free from the unrealistic expectation that every school must be all things to all people.

Principals and headmasters, too, have the freedom to make changes quickly in the design and program of their school. Unlike many of their counterparts in traditional district schools, most charter school leaders are free to decide how all of the school's funds are spent and to hire faculty and

Dancers in Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School's Catalyst Dance Company. Photograph by Alyssa Roy, twelfth grade.

staff that they believe are best qualified and suited for the job. Because charter schools have the freedom to control their budgets, staffing, school design, schedule, and other resources, they have the opportunity to create a coherent program designed specifically to execute the school's academic mission.

Because charter schools have the freedom to control their budgets, staffing, school design, schedule, and other resources, they have the opportunity to create a coherent program designed specifically to execute the school's academic mission.

Four years before the first charter school opened in the United States, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers and an early supporter of charter schools, predicted that these schools would provide an opportunity for teachers "to do things that are very different from the rest of the system and to move out of a lock-step situation." With the freedom they have brought to education, charter schools in Massachusetts have proven these words true.

Accountability

In return for the freedom they are granted, charter schools accept a high level of accountability for results. Charter schools are part of a movement changing the face of accountability systems in American government. Where traditional accountability has focused on *regulations*, the new accountability movement focuses on *results*. Service providers who were judged only by what they put *into* a program by traditional measures are now judged by what people get *out of* the program. For the first time in the history of public education, public schools are being allowed to set their own high standards and demonstrate performance against those standards, with the knowledge that they will be closed down if they do not produce good results.

With an accountability system that values results over regulations, charter schools have risen to the task.

The focus on outcomes frees charter schools to employ different educational philosophies and to teach children in different ways, giving school leaders and teachers a greater sense of autonomy and ownership for their work.

Student drawing by Tommy Phestipho, Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School.

Charter schools are perhaps the most scrutinized public schools in Massachusetts. Charter schools will not have their charters renewed only if they comply with regulations set by outside agencies. Rather, they must demonstrate actual performance on both external and internal measures. Each school must submit an accountability plan to the State, report progress annually, host a number of independent visits from the

Department of Education, and undergo a thorough four-day renewal inspection before the Commissioner and Board of Education determines whether the school merits renewal of its charter for another five years.

Perhaps the most scrutinized public schools in Massachusetts, charter schools will not have their charters renewed if they simply comply with regulations set by outside agencies, but must demonstrate actual performance on both external and internal measures.

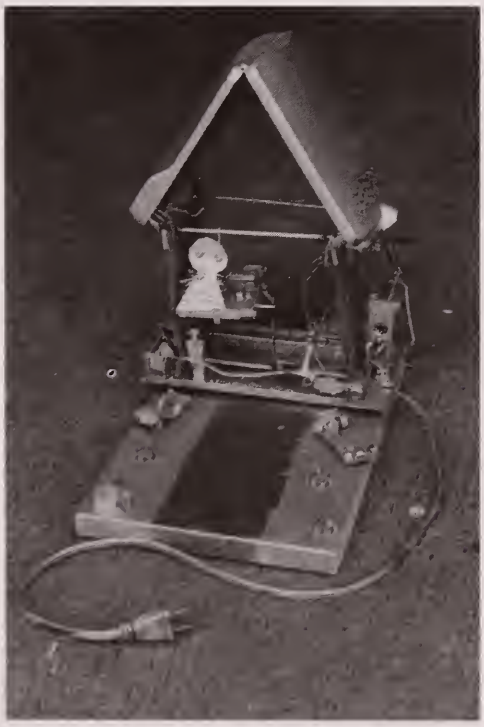
With an accountability system that values results over regulations, charter schools have risen to the task. As of March 2001, eighteen schools have had their charters renewed after exhibiting progress against the goals they had set for themselves five years earlier. Last year, four charter schools—Academy of the Pacific Rim, Health Careers Academy, Sabis International, and Somerville Charter School—scored higher on the state's MCAS exam than any other open enrollment schools in their respective districts. Other schools, like Marblehead Community Charter School and Martha's Vineyard Charter Public School have developed highly effective internal accountability systems to measure student progress on their own terms.

Innovation

Given their freedom to test ideas, and their accountability for results, charter schools are uniquely positioned to be innovators, places where new ideas can be turned into reality and good ideas can be tested and perfected. According to a study commissioned by the Department of Education, many practices found in charter schools are being done in innovative ways, the most prevalent of which seem to be: attention to the development of character and citizenship, a positive school climate, and creative approaches to the curriculum.

Charter schools are uniquely positioned to be at the center of innovation—places where new ideas can be turned into reality and good ideas can be tested and perfected.

Examples of innovative practices in Massachusetts charter schools include: a longer school day and year, second language instruction in the early grades, portfolio assessment, flexible scheduling, and collaborative school governance. Like many public schools, charter schools are also using innovative curricular materials and programs such as Success For All and Learning through Music.



"Anxious Objects: House Made from a Toaster," by Katrina Crocker, sixth grade, Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School.

A growing number of these schools have ardently pursued their role as "laboratories" from which the entire public school system can learn. Francis W. Parker Charter School regularly hosts visitors interested in learning about the Coalition for Essential Schools model; Pioneer Valley Performing Arts offers a summer program for teachers to learn about its arts-

based curriculum; Conservatory Lab Charter School is pioneering a music-based curriculum with the intent of sharing it with other elementary schools.

However, specific practices—which can also be found in district schools—are not the key innovation of charter schools. The most noteworthy innovation of charter schools is their basic structure, which gives them the ability to quickly integrate ideas and "promising practices" into a coherent, unified design, with faculty and parents who support and are committed to that design. A critical innovation for the public school system is the mission-driven nature of charter schools that draw upon the energy that comes from people working together to achieve their shared vision of the common good. This is significant because research confirms that a major problem of education reform has not been a dearth of ideas, but rather an abundance of obstacles that get in the way of spreading what works.

A critical innovation for the public school system is the mission-driven nature of charter schools that draw upon the energy that comes from people working together to achieve their shared vision of the common good.

Choice

Choice is such a central part of many Americans' lives that we forget how empowering and motivating it can be to have the ability—and the responsibility—to make a choice about something as important as which school our children attend or what kinds of people we want to work with.

At charter schools, parents have the power to choose. Especially for those parents who cannot afford private schools or a house in a wealthy suburb, having this choice is justice. It is also a choice that, according to polls and enrollment data, many parents, including those without much income or education, are eager to make.

Given choices and the ability to choose, parents from all walks of life are becoming more informed consumers of education. In 2000, nearly twelve thousand parents applied for their children to enroll in charter schools, three times as many applicants as there were spots available. It seems that when parents have the option to take responsibility for their child's education, and when they hear about others who are exercising that option, many parents are motivated to act, to investigate, and to get involved.

Neighborhood House Charter School

Painting on paper in six pieces, by eighth grade students, Neighborhood House Charter School.

Especially for those parents who cannot afford private schools or a house in a wealthy suburb, having this choice is justice.

With charter schools, faculty also have the power to choose. Teachers choose to work in schools that match their beliefs. Schools like

South Boston Harbor Academy and River Valley have attracted teaching applicants from thousands of miles away because of their mission and focus. These teachers are not just interested in the public education system but also in putting their ideas into practice and making their particular school work.

Choice means competition, which is a force that often hastens change and improvement in any organization or system.

Choice, of course, necessarily implies that one thing is being chosen over another. As a result, choice means competition, which is a force that can hasten change and improvement in any organization or system. Competition forces all schools, district and charter alike, to examine why parents, students, or prospective teachers might be choosing to go to other schools.

3 Massachusetts Charter School Nuts and Bolts

Boston Renaissance Charter School

Charter School Nuts and Bolts: Introduction

With the first charters in Massachusetts granted in 1994, charter schools are still a relative newcomer to the state. Often described as "independent public schools," charter schools are just that: hybrids that combine the characteristics of public schools with the independence that had not been granted to public schools in the past. In the way they enroll students, charters are like other public schools, mandated by their public mission to serve all children and prohibited from rejecting applicants except by lottery.

In the way they are formed, charters have greater independence and autonomy than most public schools, founded on a guiding mission and educational philosophy stated in their original charters. In the way they are funded and overseen, charters also have unique traits that make them both public and independent.

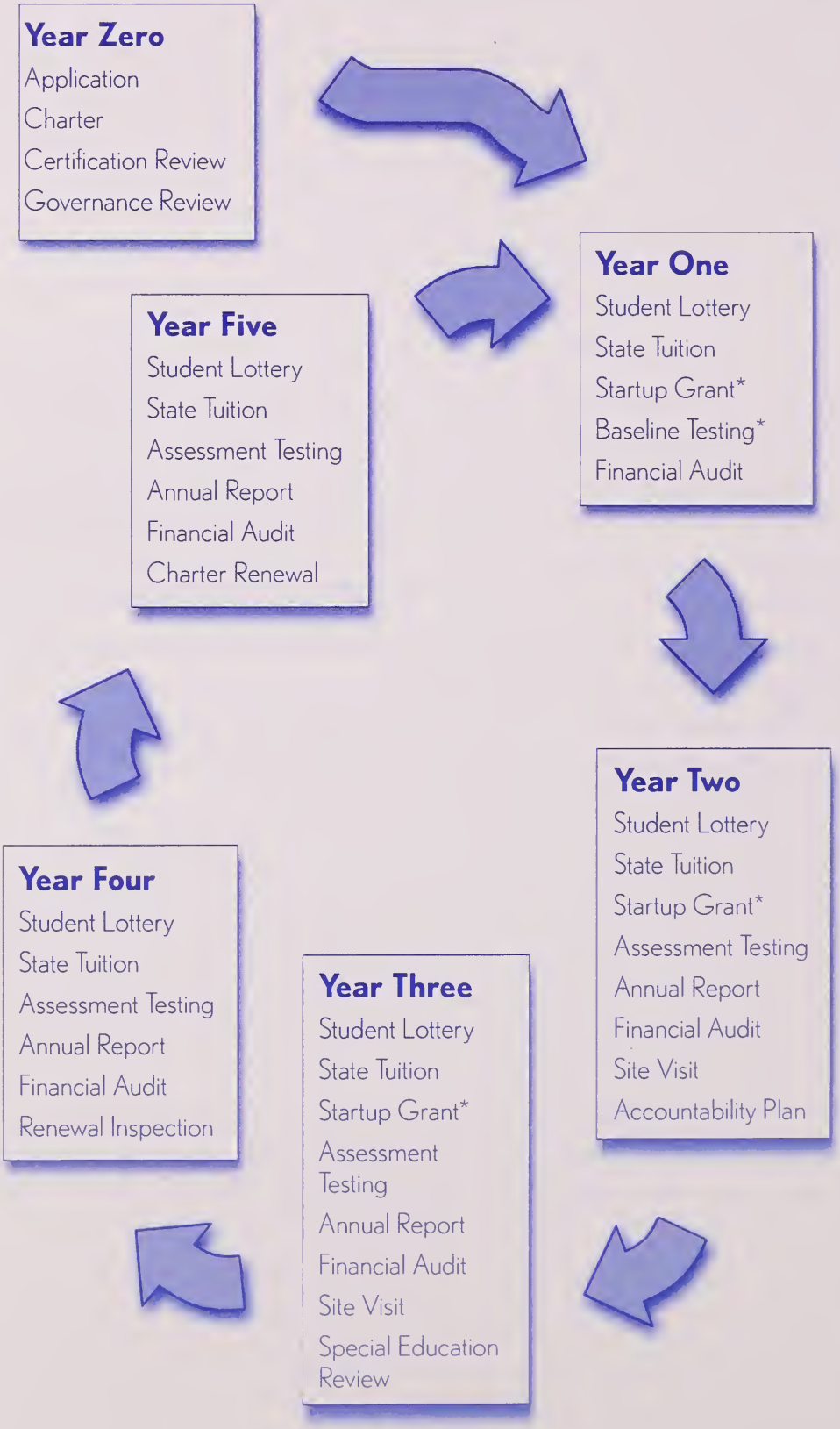
Often described as "independent public schools," charter schools are just that: hybrids that combine the characteristics of public schools with the independence that had not been granted to public schools in the past.

This section provides a more detailed description of four key aspects of how charter schools work: how they are formed, how their students enroll, how they receive funding, and how they are overseen.

Some of these practices have been in place since the original charter enabling legislation was passed in Massachusetts in 1993. Other practices have developed over time through regulatory guidance from the Department of Education and clarification of laws and regulations in the state. As the charter movement continues to mature in Massachusetts, these procedures will continue to be improved and refined to ensure that charter schools provide high quality public education.

The following page provides a brief overview of how these various pieces interconnect in the life cycle of a charter, from the submission of the charter prospectus through the five years to renewal of the charter.

Life Cycle of a Charter



* Startup grant and baseline testing only apply to first five-year charter.

Becoming a Charter School

Every charter school that opens in Massachusetts must undergo an approval and certification process before it can open its doors. The process is designed to be rigorous, in order to ensure that only those that are up to the task of running a school are approved. At the same time, it is designed to be manageable and feasible for grassroots groups with limited resources—like the teachers who started City On A Hill Charter School, the parents who started Lynn Community Charter School or the community leaders who started Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School.

Pre-Application

Anyone interested in starting a charter school in Massachusetts must first submit a brief prospectus. In the prospectus, each group outlines what it is proposing, from the school's mission and educational approach to its intended structures of accountability and governance. A panel assembled by the Department of Education reviews each prospectus. If a prospectus meets the Department of Education's review criteria, the Commissioner then invites the applicant group to submit a final application.

The process of applying for a charter is designed to be rigorous, in order to ensure that only those that are up to the task of running a school are approved. At the same time, it is designed to be manageable and feasible for grassroots groups with limited resources.

Charter Application

Charter school applications can be up to 75 pages long and must describe what the group is proposing and how it will ensure that it accomplishes its goals. The application includes the school's mission statement, academic standards, educational program, performance standards, assessment system, statement of need, evidence of capacity to operate, and description of the school's leadership and governance.

A panel assembled by the Department of Education reviews applications. Hearings are also held for public comment on applications and found-

ing groups are invited to interviews by the Department of Education. Based on the review, hearings, and interview, the Commissioner of Education makes recommendations to the Board of Education. The Board then votes to grant charters to new schools.

Schools that pass this scrutiny and are deemed to have potential, viability, and purpose are granted a charter by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In the six years March of 1994, when the first charters were granted, to March of 2001, when the most recent pool of charters was given out, the state had received 263 applications, out of which 52 charters were granted. From the time that they are granted their charters, founding groups have six to eighteen months to open their school doors and begin operation.

Certification and Governance Reviews

Before schools can open their doors, they must show that they are in compliance with all applicable state and local laws and regulations and that they have in place the systems and procedures necessary to operate effectively. Schools undergo a certification review to ensure that they are in compliance with relevant health and safety codes and that they have developed the necessary systems to run their school as they proposed in their charter. They also undergo a governance review in which their Board of Trustees is visited by a group of observers assembled by the Department of Education.

Seven Hills Charter School

Doors Open

Finally, one to two years after a prospectus first outlined the idea, the school opens its doors to its first class of students. A new school has been created and a new effort to bring the highest quality education to Massachusetts school children has begun.

Oversight and Accountability

Every charter school is governed by a Board of Trustees. That Board is responsible for holding the school accountable to the highest standards. Each charter school board is, in return, held accountable to the people of Massachusetts through the state's Department of Education. Both the school's Board of Trustees and the state's Board of Education ask three questions of the schools they oversee.

Is the school faithful to its mission?
Is the school an academic success?
Is the school a viable organization?

Because they have a greater measure of autonomy than district public schools, charter schools are also held to a more rigorous level of accountability. This extra level of charter school accountability is seen in five areas: the school charter, accountability plan, annual reports, site visits, and renewal inspection. These are described below.

Both the school's Board of Trustees and the state's Board of Education ask three questions of the schools they oversee. *Is the school faithful to its mission? Is the school an academic success? Is the school a viable organization?*

Charter

Every charter that is granted to a school is the culmination of a rigorous application process (see *Becoming a Charter School*). The charter serves as a blueprint for what each school will become and forms the basis for the standards to which the school will be held accountable. In their charter applications, school founders must describe the school's mission and educational philosophy. They must describe how this educational philosophy will promote academic success. And they must provide information on the school's management, governance, and financial structures that will provide for viability. The charter document thus serves as the unique statement of the character and substance of the new school.

Accountability Plan

To ensure that schools set measurable objectives for themselves, the Department of Education requires each charter school to submit an account-

ability plan before its second year of operation. This plan must articulate the academic and non-academic performance objectives the school has established for its students and for the school itself. The Department's Charter School Office provides guidance and up to $20,000 in funding over three years to help schools develop a plan that is clear, coherent, comprehensive, and consistent with high academic standards.

Annual Report

A charter school must report on progress toward the objectives stated in its accountability plan in an annual report to the Department of Education and the public. An annual report re-states the objectives articulated in the school's accountability plan, indicates the assessment tools used to measure progress and performance against those objectives, and presents a summary and analysis of data produced by such assessments. Annual reports serve as the basis of each school's public record of performance.

Site Visits

During the second and third years of a school's operation, a panel of citizens, outside educators, and staff from the Department of Education conduct a day-long site visit to the school. The primary purpose of a site visit is to corroborate and augment the information contained in a school's annual report, especially regarding stated progress relative to student and school performance objectives. Each site visit team produces a written report summarizing its findings, which becomes part of the school's public record of performance.

A charter school must report on progress toward the objectives stated in its accountability plan in an annual report to the Department of Education and the public.

Charter Renewal

School charters must be renewed every five years. In order for a school's charter to be renewed, it must submit an application for renewal during the third, fourth, or fifth year of its charter. The school then undergoes a three- to four-day renewal inspection. Inspection teams are composed of veteran

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

teachers and school leaders and follow an inspection protocol based largely on the British school inspection method. The inspection team submits a report, which is presented to the Commissioner of Education along with the rest of the school's public record of performance. The Board of Education then votes on whether to renew the school's charter. To date, eighteen schools have applied for and received charter renewals.

Public School Accountability Guidelines

In addition to the requirements described above, charter schools are responsible for meeting all accountability standards set forth in state laws and regulations that apply to public schools. While charter schools are afforded greater flexibility than district public schools in determining *how* they will meet these standards, like all public schools they have no choice in *whether* they will meet them.

While charter schools are afforded greater flexibility than district public schools in determining *how* they will meet accountability standards, like all public schools they have no choice in *whether* they will meet them.

For instance, all charter schools are held to the same standard as public schools in assuring the health and safety of students, furnishing necessary support to meet the needs of special education students, and in administering the state's comprehensive assessment system (MCAS) to students. Every charter school, like

every school district, is subject to an annual financial audit, and every charter school, like every school district, is required to hear and respond to complaints from parents.

Oversight of Special Education

Laws governing special education classify students with disabilities at levels from 502.1, the mildest, to 502.8, the most severe. Charter schools are required by law to educate students with disabilities who are classified in prototypes 502.1 through 502.4, ranging from those who require some modification to regular education programs to "substantially separate" programs. Students at levels 502.4i through 502.8 require separate educational programs, residential facilities, or hospital services, and therefore tend to be enrolled outside of school settings.

Every public school in Massachusetts is visited by a Program Quality Assurance Team from the Department of Education every three years.

In keeping with federal requirements, every public school in Massachusetts—charter and district alike—is visited by a Program Quality Assurance Team from the Department of Education every three years. This team monitors schools for compliance with civil rights laws, including provisions requiring appropriate services for students with special needs.

Enrollment and Withdrawal

Every year, charter schools receive thousands of applications from parents and students eager to enroll in their schools. In the 1999-2000 school year, Massachusetts charter schools received enough applications to fill three times as many charter school spots as were available. Every school may design its own enrollment procedures, but must do so following specific guidelines set by Massachusetts law in order to ensure that enrollment is open and fair to all applicants.

Admission Guidelines

Charter schools are public schools and, as such, are open to all students to whom other Massachusetts public schools are open. Like all public schools, charter schools may not discriminate in admissions. Schools may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or ancestry. It is worth noting that, unlike private and parochial schools, charter schools are also prohibited from discriminating on the basis of students' mental or physical ability, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

Schools are required to offer preference to applicants who live in the city or town in which the school is located, who have siblings already enrolled at the school, and who have successfully completed the grade prior to the one for which they are applying. Horace Mann schools must also give preference to students currently enrolled in other public schools in the school district.

Neighborhood House Charter School

Eligibility Criteria

Schools must show that any eligibility criteria they use do not serve to discourage parents in any discriminato-

ry manner. For instance, a school that is located in a diverse, multilingual area must show that it has given equal opportunity for families with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to attend and understand informational sessions. Similarly, schools may not base admissions on tests or auditions, nor give preference to particular students or parents of students.

School Lottery

Since most charter schools receive more applications for admission than they have spaces, admission decisions are made by lottery. Parents or students learn about the lottery through information sessions, advertisements, media coverage, or other ways in which the school has publicized itself. Parents must then submit an application in order to be eligible. Most school lotteries are held during the spring term, prior to the school year for which children are applying. Students who are not selected for admission through the lottery are placed on a waiting list in the order in which their names are drawn. If students choose not to attend the charter school or transfer during the course of the year, new students are enrolled from the waiting list.

Charter schools are open to all students to whom other Massachusetts public schools are open. Like all public schools, charter schools may not discriminate in admissions.

Withdrawal

As in all public schools, students in charter schools can be withdrawn for a few specific reasons. If a child and his or her parents choose to leave a school, they may do so, usually after discussion with the school leader. Students may also be expelled from charter schools for the same reasons that they may be expelled from non-charter schools. These are prescribed by law and include possession of weapons or drugs or acts of violence. Expulsion has been an extreme rarity. Last year, there were only eight expulsions from charter schools in Massachusetts, a rate of less than one in 1,000.

School Financing

Charter schools receive their funding primarily from three sources: student tuition, government grants, and private fund development. In the 1999-2000 school year, tuition comprised on average more than eighty percent of the revenue of Massachusetts charter schools. Government grants accounted for an additional ten percent of the average school's revenue. Private fund development, the smallest portion of funding, accounted for about three percent of revenue at the average charter school.

Per Pupil Tuition

The key difference between funding for charter schools and funding for non-charter public schools is per pupil tuition. While non-charter schools receive a set amount of funding from the school district, charter schools receive funding calculated to directly reflect the number of students enrolled at the school.

For each child a Commonwealth charter school enrolls, it receives a sum from the state equal to the average cost per student in the school district in which that child resides. For instance, when enrollment at South Boston Harbor Academy increased by 40 Boston students, it received $8,683 from Massachusetts for each of those students, equal to the average cost of educating a child in the Boston Public Schools.

The "average cost per student" calculation for Commonwealth schools uses a single, consolidated rate for every child—that is, an average rate that is the same for all students in the district. For Horace Mann charter schools, tuition is calculated through negotiations between the charter school and school dis-

Lynn Community Charter School

trict, and can be done in different ways by different districts. While these rates do not take into account the age, income, or special needs the student may have, some of these student characteristics are addressed by government entitlement grants (see below).

Government Grants for All Public Schools

Charter schools, like all public schools, are eligible for a variety of government grants. In the last year, charter schools received a total of $8.2 million in funding from state and federal government grants. While this is a small amount compared to the total received by all public schools in Massachusetts, it does represent a significant investment that both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States have made in Massachusetts charter schools.

Some of the largest such grants are Title I, which provides assistance to local school districts to meet the needs of low achieving students, and Special Education grants, which help public schools increase opportunities for students with disabilities. In 1999-2000, charter schools received about $2.0 million from Title I and Special Education, just under one percent of the $227.3 million received by all public schools in Massachusetts.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School

Government Grants for Charter Schools

The state and federal government also fund a small number of grants designed specifically to address the needs of charter schools.

A three-year planning grant is made available to

every new charter school, providing an average of $150,000 a year. In 1999-2000, schools used this money for such work as conducting student assessment, developing effective governance, and developing school accountability plans.

A facilities grant is made available to all Commonwealth charter schools to offset the cost of school facilities. The grant amount is set by the state legislature each year based on the school enrollment. In 1999-2000, each school received 245 dollars per student.

Private Contributions

Like all public schools, charter schools are also able to raise money from private sources, turning to parents, community members, foundations, and businesses for support. While charter schools appear to have been more successful than many district schools in this arena, private funds nonetheless are far from being a major source of revenue. The average charter school receives about three and a half percent of its funding from private sources. One quarter of charter schools report no private fund raising. On the other hand, a handful of charter schools have met with dramatic success in their fund development efforts, with schools like Community Day, Neighborhood House, and Boston Renaissance each reporting more than $600,000 in private contributions.

A handful of charter schools have met with dramatic success in their fund development efforts, with three schools each reporting more than $600,000 in private contributions.

4 Six Key Challenges for the Charter School Initiative

Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School

Six Key Challenges: Introduction

Like any ambitious effort, the charter initiative faces the enormous challenge of turning hopeful ideals into realistic accomplishments. Dreaming of a new educational system for tens of thousands of families is far easier than starting and running one small school for one hundred of them. Yet, it is the small day-to-day challenges that must be met if the initiative is to achieve its greater dreams.

A review of the charter school initiative in 2001 reveals six central challenges that schools face in Massachusetts and around the country: development of accountability systems, self governance, facility financing, school management, special education, and dissemination of model practices. While our understanding of these challenges in charter schools continues to grow, recurring themes are clear.

A review of the charter school initiative in 2001 reveals six central challenges that schools face in Massachusetts and around the country: accountability systems, self governance, facility financing, school management, special education, and dissemination of model practices.

Portrait in pencil on paper, by Daniel Duggan, sixth grade, South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School

Accountability for Results

Perhaps the most revolutionary innovation of charter schools is the concept itself: In return for extraordinary freedom at the school level, each school must meet the demand of genuine accountability for results. This focus on results is generally agreed to be an effective method of holding programs accountable, but one which requires well-conceived accountability systems to be put in place. In order for such systems to be effective now and in the future, schools and their authorizing agencies must face four challenges in the present: developing measures that fit their educational philosophy, consistently tracking students over time, aligning with standards, and developing a new approach to regulation. Schools everywhere can learn lessons from the ways some Massachusetts charter schools have met these challenges.

The emphasis on performance requires shifting focus from what goes *into* a project to what comes *out of* it.

Focusing on Performance

Before judgments can be made about performance, schools face the challenge of collecting the information necessary to make those judgments. In order to be able to demonstrate academic success, every charter school in Massachusetts is required to develop a clear accountability plan for its school and students. This emphasis on performance is not always easy, as it requires shifting focus from what goes *into* a project to what comes *out of* it. Schools that have done this successfully have carefully aligned their educational program with relevant performance measures.

One example is Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School. In its mission, Benjamin Franklin states that it will provide students with "sound character development." The school provides a variety of inputs that can help this to occur, ranging from community service opportunities to weekly character journals.

While it is easy to measure the number of community service projects in which students participate or the number of journal entries they write, it is far more difficult to measure the results of that work. Benjamin Franklin has addressed this by developing a variety of related outcome measures. Using these measures, teachers assess how well students can identify social

problems, how well they can suggest ways to address social problems, and how well they can demonstrate their understanding of the character virtues involved. In this way, the school is able to measure not just what goes into character development but, more importantly, what comes out of it.

Collecting Data Longitudinally

As schools measure student performance, successful ones use the data they collect not simply to generate reports, but to drive decision-making and to continually assess and re-assess what works for their students. Schools like Marblehead Community Charter School and the Somerville Charter School have been able to paint this complete picture of student achievement by doing three things.

First, they have consistently used the same type of test to record student progress over time. Many schools use external tests to do this—Marblehead, for instance, uses the Stanford-9. Many schools have developed their own internal measures—at Somerville, students are assessed for mastery of core subject in each subject area. The important feature both have in common is that they have used consistent, quantifiable measures of student progress, making comparison possible.

The second thing many schools have done is track individual student scores on those tests, so that they are able to compare scores not just across the school or a single grade, but also between an individual student's past and present performance.

Third, they have not only collected this information, but have reported it using longitudinal cohort analysis. That is, they have looked at test scores as student progress through their school years (longitudinal analysis) and have done so for the same group of students over time (cohort analysis).

Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School

When schools do these three things, they help to meet the challenge of performance-based accountability.

Aligning with Standards

Alongside the growth of charter schools has been the rise of standards in education represented in Massachusetts by the development of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) curriculum frameworks and exam. While the charter school initiative frees schools to use various methods to attain strong results, the standards movement demands that all schools be measured against high standards for those results. In Massachusetts, many charter schools have found unique ways to align their curricula with state standards, using creative methods to reach statewide goals. As a result, students at schools like Academy of the Pacific Rim and Sabis International have achieved a high level of success at meeting the state's standards on the MCAS exam.

Not only does performance-based accountability call for a new approach in schools, it also calls for a new approach from government regulatory agencies.

Rethinking Regulatory Approaches

Not only does performance-based accountability call for a new approach in schools, it also calls for a new approach from government regulatory agencies. Traditionally, state departments of education have emphasized the need for schools to comply with federal and state regulations. Now, the state must look for evidence not only of compliance, but also of success. State charter authorizers face the continuing struggle to collect this evidence from schools, without imposing new, burdensome regulations on them.

In some states, this struggle is made more difficult by the fact that there are two, three, or even several dozen agencies able to grant charters, each using a different standard and asking for different evidence of success. Massachusetts has avoided this problem by setting up the state Board of Education as the only charter-authorizing agency. The state has also taken a careful approach, piloting its charter oversight methods with an initial maximum of 25 schools in the state, then expanding to 50, and most recently to 120. By gradually increasing the number of schools allowed in the Commonwealth, the State has been able to continually assess its methods of oversight in order to remain as efficient and effective as possible, striving wherever possible to raise expectations for student success without increasing regulation of charter schools.

Self Governance

One of the distinguishing features of charter schools—some say their most distinguishing feature—is that they are self-governing bodies, each reporting to its own independent Board of Trustees. These boards are legally responsible for developing and overseeing all school policies. Such independence can be the seed of innovation, as self-governance affords each school the flexibility to deal with its unique problems and take advantage of its unique strengths.

In order to effectively take advantage of that independence, it is essential that schools develop sound governance. Schools with sound governance are noteworthy for three key features.

If charter schools are to remain viable in the long term, it is essential that they develop effective and sound governance.

First, like nonprofit boards, successful charter school boards take responsibility for defining the vision, principles, and policies of their school, and hold the executive director—in this case, the school leader—responsible for carrying these out.

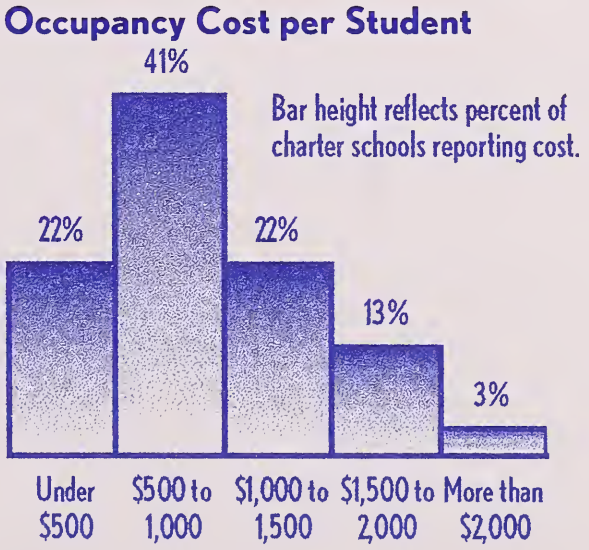
Second, successful charter school boards have clearly demarcated the management responsibilities of the school leader and the policy-making responsibilities of the board. By doing this, these schools are able to function smoothly and are able to respond to problems as they arise, preventing these from turning into crises.

Third, such boards have been able to translate the vision of the original founding group into a sustainable program even after the founders are gone. These boards carry on the core mission of the school and use it to guide their work. At the same time, they are familiar with their legal and fiduciary responsibilities and are able to mesh these with their mission.

To support charter schools in their development of sound governance, the Department of Education provides $8,000 for every new charter school to dedicate to board development. In addition, the Charter School Office recently published *The Blue Book*, a reference guide to the laws and regulations that apply to charter schools.

School Facilities

Perhaps the single greatest challenge charter schools face is a lack of access to capital for the acquisition, expansion, or improvement of school facilities. Opening a new school brings with it the need to rent, lease, build, or buy building space for anywhere from several dozen to more than a thousand students and staff. Searching for real estate, learning zoning laws, and acquiring capital investment are not the activities that most charter school leaders and boards expect to occupy their startup work, but inevitably they are. Since virtually all district public schools already own their facilities, this yields a dramatic difference in management needs and resources required by charter and district public schools.



Most charter schools report spending between $500 and $1,000 per student on occupancy, and 38 percent of schools report spending over $1,000.

Of the forty charter schools operating in Massachusetts in 2000-01, only three are housed in buildings that were custom-built for their needs. The rest are located in sites that once housed everything from parochial schools to restaurants, banks, or strip malls. Eleven of the forty charter schools have less than eighty square feet of space per child. By 2004, if school enrollment grows as expected, seventeen schools will have facilities with less than eighty square feet of space per child. Two-thirds of charter schools report that they are currently looking for new facilities.

Some schools, particularly those in the startup phase, spend as much as 20 to 33 percent of their overall budget on rent and maintenance of facilities. The average charter school spends $883 per student on occupancy alone, though the range from lowest to highest is great: Rising Tide Charter School reports spending more than $3500 per student, while Francis W.

Parker Charter School reports spending less than $100 (see Chapter Five for more detail).

The challenge of procuring facilities at a reasonable cost is exacerbated by two facts.

First, most charter schools have difficulty accessing private loans. There are several reasons for this. These schools are brand new organizations with no credit history and limited resources. With charters that must be renewed every five years, private banks are wary of issuing the long-term loans that are necessary for major capital investment.

Most charter schools have difficulty accessing private loans because of their lack of credit history and limited resources. In addition, charter schools have limited access to public funds that are available to district schools.

Second, charter schools have limited access to public funds that are available to district schools. While large school districts will normally issue debt through municipal bonds, individual schools rarely do so. Only two states—Colorado and North Carolina—are reported to have had bonds issued by charter schools. In Massachusetts, charter schools also do not have access to school building assistance funds, which are made available to Massachusetts school districts.

In its annual state budget, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has sought to help schools address this by setting aside funds specifically for facilities financing at charter schools. All Commonwealth charter schools receive 245 dollars per student, on average covering 28 percent of occupancy costs. If the challenge of facility financing is to be met, more will need to be done to help charter schools meet the obstacles that face them.

School Management

When a Board of Trustees is granted a charter, it has been granted the right to create a school. Along with that, it has been handed the responsibility for making that school a viable, well-managed organization. Effective management is a key challenge for all schools, and particularly for new ones. Schools that have been successful in meeting this challenge have done so in one of two ways.

First, many schools have taken the time to develop efficient internal systems to manage finances and information for the school. These schools have recognized the benefit of a strong infrastructure to support their educational program, and ensured that that infrastructure was built before the school began operations. By further investing in technology, schools are able to track all of the information that goes through their corridors every day.

A second approach some schools have taken is to contract with a major management company to provide these services. In some cases, such contracts are with experienced nonprofit agencies. For instance, Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses provides major management services for the Neighborhood House Charter School. By turning to an existing nonprofit, Neighborhood House is able to benefit from existing systems and experience. In other cases, these contracts are with for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs). Of the 48 groups holding charters in Massachusetts in 2001, twelve have contracted with such an organization,

River Valley Charter School

such as Edison Schools, Sabis Educational Systems, Advantage Schools, or Beacon Educational Management.

Such management contracts work best when they are the result of deliberate and thoughtful discussion between members of the Board of Trustees and representatives of the EMO. The most effective EMO contracts are those that clarify the EMO's responsibilities for provision of services and the Board's responsibilities for oversight, including such key provisions as the development of the school's budget, curriculum, and accountability plan. The Department of Education has developed a contract oversight protocol to assist charter school Boards of Trustees in this endeavor.

When a Board of Trustees is granted a charter, it has been granted the right to create a school. Along with that, it has been handed the responsibility for making that school a viable, well-managed organization.

By carefully crafting systems and infrastructure for the management of their schools, Boards of Trustees can help to ensure that they remain viable over time. Whether it is by hiring its own staff to do so or by contracting with an EMO, the Board of Trustees maintains final responsibility for meeting this key challenge.

Special Education

According to the U.S. Department of Education, an estimated one of every nine students in charter schools nationwide has been identified as a student with special needs. In Massachusetts—with one of the highest special needs populations in the country—the number is one in six. In the last several years, public school systems have put increasing emphasis on inclusion of these students in mainstream classrooms, providing them with access to the same social environment and learning opportunities as their peers.

For any school, providing quality education for a child with learning disabilities is a challenge. At many charter schools, the mission of the school is so tailored to individualized learning that the school is able to offer new and innovative ways to meet that challenge. Indeed, many special education students have Individualized Education Plans that call for smaller classes, individualized instruction, printed class notes for students, and efforts not to stigmatize children as "different," accommodations that many charter schools provide not just to a few students but to the entire student body. For example, at Community Day Charter School in Lawrence, every student has a learning plan tailored to his or her "special needs," whether that student has been identified as a special education student or not. No students receive separate "special education" services. As a result, no students have the "special needs" label and every child is provided with services that have been

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

approved by the Department of Education as meeting the needs of special education students.

Resources for Special Education

Among the challenges facing charter schools in the development of special education programs is the economics of implementing a full array of services for students with disabilities while working with budget resources substantially smaller than those commanded by a public school district. In an effort to offset this disadvantage, some Massachusetts charter schools are in the early stages of the formation of a special education collaborative. The purpose of the collaborative is to provide high quality services to every student in need, while mitigating the economic impact on the small budgets of participating charter schools.

In this way, charter schools, many of which already have the advantage of educational programs that fit the needs of special education students, are working to overcome the barrier of limited resources. In doing so, they continue to ensure that all children can benefit from the innovations and high quality education that they can provide.

Individualized Education Plans often call for smaller classes, individualized instruction, printed up class notes for students, and efforts not to stigmatize children as "different," accommodations that many charter schools provide not just to a few students but to the entire student body.

Models for Replication

The law that brought charter schools to Massachusetts in 1993 described one of the key purposes of these schools as that of providing "models for replication in other public schools." Indeed, with less than one percent of public school students in the United States enrolled in charter schools, the broader impact of charter schools will come from those lessons that can be disseminated to the other 99 percent of public school students.

Charter schools can serve as small "laboratories" where increased autonomy allows school leaders to experiment with innovative practices in ways that would be impossible in large school districts.

In this view, charter schools can serve as small "laboratories" where increased autonomy allows school leaders to experiment with innovative practices in ways that would be impossible in large school districts. The lessons learned by trying out innovative practices in these small laboratories can then be disseminated to larger school district to benefit more schools and their children.

In a growing number of Massachusetts schools, this has already begun to happen. Charter schools like Cape Cod Lighthouse and Pioneer Valley Performing Arts have designed and implemented programs to work in partnership with neighboring public schools to improve student achievement. Other schools such as Francis W. Parker and the Neighborhood

"Anxious Objects: Bas-Relief Sculpture Made from a Stereo," by Billy Dougherty and Andrew McKay, Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

House Charter School have developed efforts to engage in collaborative professional development whereby educators from charter and district schools can learn from one another.

By building such collaborative efforts, some focused on student achievement, others focused on professional development, charter schools help to fulfill their role as models for replication in the public school system. Through such efforts, the impact of these education "laboratories" has the potential to grow exponentially as new ideas that are tested in one school can be replicated in dozens more.

By building collaborative efforts, charter schools help to fulfill their role as models for replication in the public school system.

5 Overview of Charter Schools in Massachusetts

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

Introduction: Charter Schools in Massachusetts

In 1999-2000, there were 39 charter schools operating in Massachusetts, enrolling 12,657 children with 9,835 more on their waiting lists. (The following is based on statistics from the 37 of those schools that reported data in 2001. Data was not available from two schools that returned their charters in the 2000-01 school year.)

Before the year began, these schools had received 11,769 applications for just 3,592 spots, a ratio of more than three applicants for every opening. Over the course of the year, they were in operation for a total of 48,234 hours, spent $108.1 million, employed 1,526 full-time equivalent staff, used 2,408 computers, and held more than 100,000 volumes in their libraries.

This chapter provides a summary of data available on charter schools to paint a picture of the impact this growing initiative has had on the Commonwealth. Data on the 1999-2000 school year has been collected from the 37 charter schools that continued to be in operation in 2000-01.

Charter Schools in Massachusetts

As of 2001, there were 40 operating charter schools in Massachusetts and eight groups holding charters for schools to be opened within the next two years. As shown on the accompanying map, in most cases, a charter school is the only one in its district. However, six school districts — Barnstable, Boston, Lawrence, Lowell, Springfield, and Worcester — had more than one school, making up more than half the charter schools in the state. Following the geographic distribution of schools from east to west, four charters were held on Cape Cod and the Islands, nine in Southeastern Massachusetts, fifteen in the Boston area, ten in Northeastern Massachusetts, and ten in the western part of the state.

- ■ Commonwealth Charter School, charter renewed
- • Commonwealth Charter School, operating in 1999-2000
- • Horace Mann Charter School, operating in 1999-2000
- ○ Commonwealth Charter School, open after 1999-2000
- ○ Horace Mann Charter School, open after 1999-2000

• Academy of the Pacific Rim
• Boston Evening
■ Boston Renaissance
■ City on a Hill
○ Codman Academy
• Conservatory Lab
○ Edward Brooke
○ Frederick Douglass
• Health Careers
○ Media and Technology
■ Neighborhood House
• Roxbury Prep
• South Boston Harbor
Academy of Strategic Learning
River Valley
Lawrence Family ■ ■ Community Day
Lowell Middlesex •
○ Lowell Community
Murdoch ■
Mystic Valley •
Somerville ■
Marblehead Community
Lynn Community
Benjamin Banneker ■
Framingham •
Community
South Shore
Benjamin
Franklin ■
• Champion
• Sabis Foxborough
○ Northern Bristol
Rising Tide ■
Cape Cod
Lighthouse ■
■ Atlantis
New Bedford Global Learning ○
Barnstable •
Sturgis •
Martha's Vineyard Community ■

Charter School Initiative Timeline

June 1993

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act allows for the creation of 25 charter schools, making Massachusetts the fourth state in the nation with charter school legislation.

July 1993

The Massachusetts Charter School Resource Center is founded.

March 1994

After receiving 64 charter applications, the Massachusetts Board of Education grants its first 15 charters.

August/September 1995

The first 15 charter schools in Massachusetts open their doors to more than 2500 students.

August/September 1996

The 1996 class of charter schools opens its doors, bringing 7 new charter schools to Massachusetts.

October 1996

Neighborhood House Charter School becomes the first school to receive an official Department of Education site review . By the end of 2000, 74 routine site visits have been made.

June 1997

Legislation raises the cap on charter schools to 50, and divides these into 37 Commonwealth and 13 Horace Mann schools.

August/September 1997

The 1997 class of charter schools opens its doors, bringing 2 new charter schools to Massachusetts.

September 1997

Boston Renaissance becomes the first charter school visited by the state Quality Assurance Program, which conducts routine reviews of special education and civil rights compliance. By the end of 2000, 15 schools have been reviewed.

July 1997

Unable to meet the State's strict accountability requirements, YouthBuild Boston Charter School becomes the first charter school in Massachusetts to return its charter.

August 1997

Fifteen charter schools submit the first accountability plans in the state. By the end of 2000, 39 schools had submitted plans.

April 1998

For the first time, charter schools receive state funding to offset the cost of developing facilities.

August/September 1998

The 1998 class of charter schools opens its doors, bringing 10 new charter schools to Massachusetts.

April 1999

Benjamin Franklin, Community Day, and Sabis International become the first three schools to have their charters renewed by the Board of Education. By the end of 2000, 14 charters had been renewed.

August 1999

Prior to beginning operation, the Horace Mann Charter School of Essential Studies becomes the second group to return its charter, this time due to the group's inability to find an adequate facility.

August/September 1999

The 1999 class of charter schools opens its doors, bringing 5 new charter schools to Massachusetts.

August/September 2000

The 2000 class of charter schools opens its doors, bringing 3 new charter schools to Massachusetts.

May 2000

State funding is made available for schools to disseminate lessons from the charter school movement.

June 2000

Legislation raises the cap on charter schools to 72 Commonwealth and 48 Horace Mann.

June 2000

The Charter School Association of Massachusetts is founded by Hilltown Cooperative Charter School.

August-December 2000

Unable to meet the State's strict accountability requirements, Boston University Residential and North Star Academy return their charters.

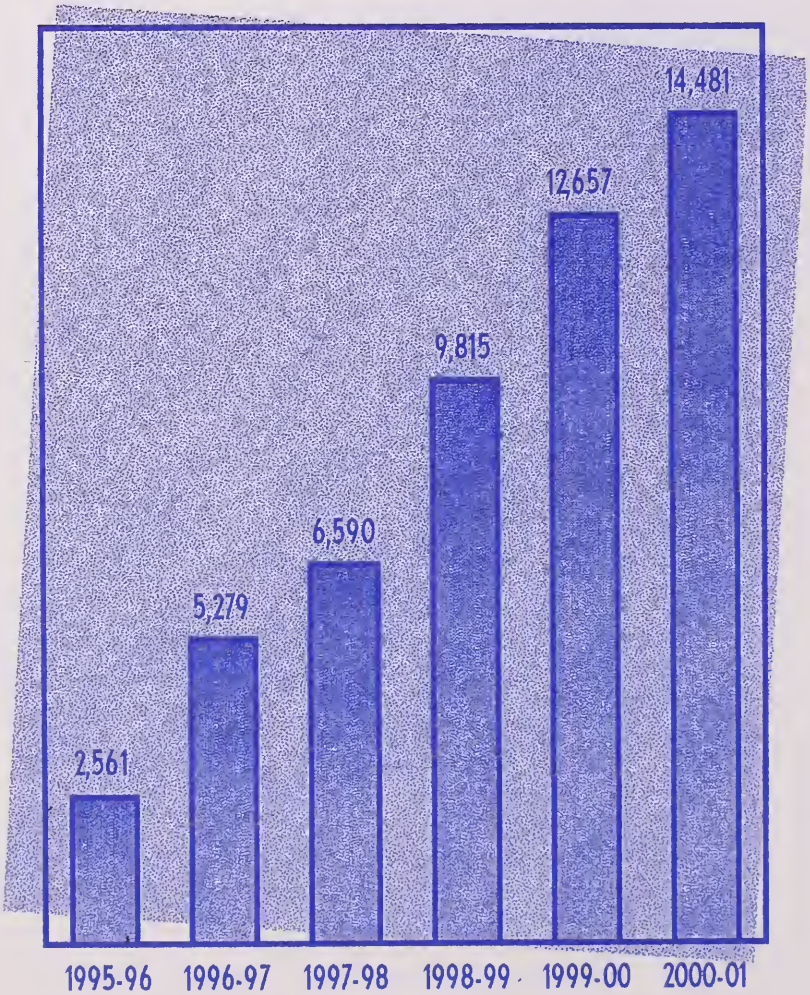
March 2001

Seven new charters are granted to schools that will open their doors in the 2001-02 and 2002-03 school years.

Applications and Enrollment

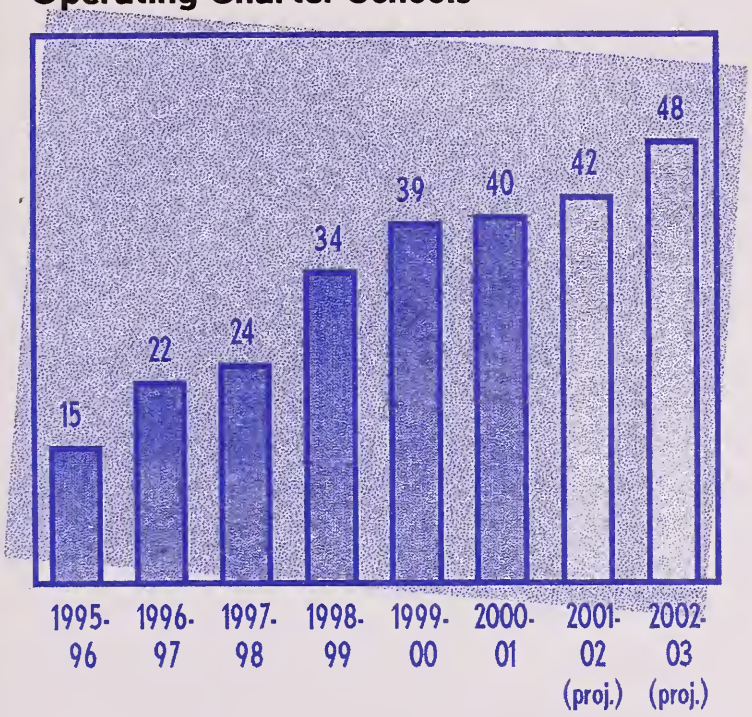
Since the first Massachusetts charter schools opened their doors to 2,561 students in 1995, demand for charter school enrollment has never slacked. As of 1999-2000, charter schools enrolled 12,657 students, a four-fold increase from 1995. The 1999-2000 school year saw 11,769 parents submit applications for just 3,592 open spots in charter schools around the state, a ratio of 3.28 applications for each opening.

Enrollment



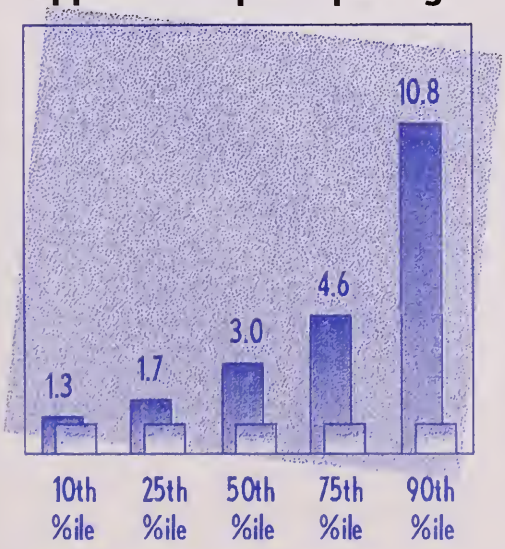
Charter school enrollment has grown from just over 2500 students in the first 15 charter schools to nearly 14,500 students by 2000-01. This represents a significant annual growth, averaging 45 percent over the five years.

Operating Charter Schools



Since the first 15 charter schools opened in Massachusetts in 1995, the number of schools has grown steadily each year, limited only by the rigorous application process required before a new school is approved and caps imposed by the legislature. Until 1997, only 25 charters were available in the state and until 2000 only 37 Commonwealth charters were available. Projected data for the 2001-02 and 2002-03 school years shows that at least 48 schools will be in operation by 2002.

Applications per Opening

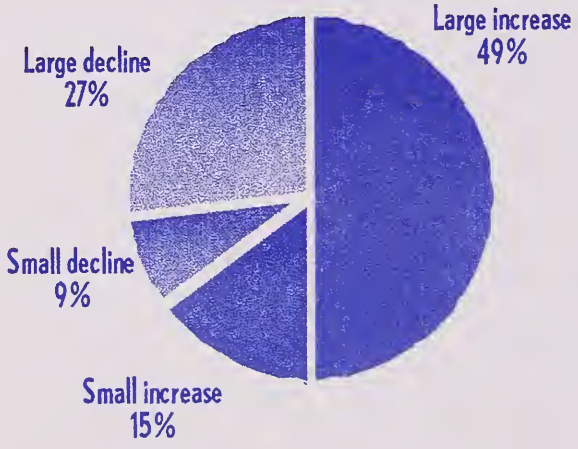


The graph at left shows the application rate at schools from the 10th percentile (ten percent of schools with the fewest applications per opening) to the 90th percentile (schools with the most applications per opening). The average (50th percentile) school had three applicants for every opening, with half of schools reporting between 1.7 and 4.4. At the top end of the scale are schools that report more than 10.8 applicants for every opening, reflecting the high demand for charter schools in some communities.

Academic Achievement

One of the key questions every charter school must answer is whether it is an academic success. While data continues to be collected and analyzed, a preliminary review of scores from norm-referenced tests such as the Stanford-9, California Achievement Test, and Iowa Test of Basic Skills administered at 31 schools to more than 100 classes* begins to answer that question. For the purposes of this report, an "increase" in test scores means that scores improved more than would be expected over the course of a year, while a "decline" indicates that they improved less than would be expected. With 64 percent of classes posting greater than expected growth in math and 58 percent of classes posting greater than expected growth in reading, the reviews so far appear to be positive.

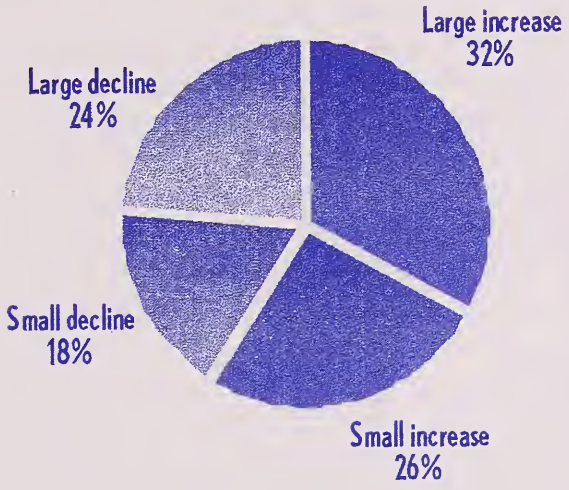
Math



The pie chart above reflects the amount that classes' math test scores increased or declined in relation to their peers across the nation over the course of a year. In math, nearly half (49 percent) of the classes greatly exceeded expectations, posting test scores that increased by more than three percentage points over the course of a year. In 14 classes (15 percent), scores increased a smaller amount, making for a total of 64 percent of classes reporting an improvement in test scores. In the remaining 35 classes (36 percent), scores declined. Data is based on scores for 95 classes at 24 schools. Only schools that reported norm-referenced test scores in math were included.

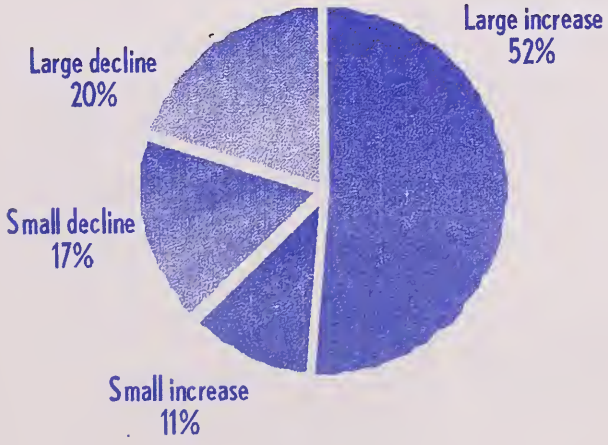
*A class corresponds to one grade tested at one school. For instance, if a middle school tested its sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, then it has three class scores reported.

Reading



One out of every three classes (32 percent) reported large increases on reading tests, posting test scores that improved by more than three percentage points over the course of a year. Twenty-six percent reported a small increase and only 18 percent a small decline over the course of a year. Only 20 classes (24 percent) reported scores that declined by more than three points. Data is based on scores reported for 85 classes at 24 schools. Only schools that reported norm-referenced test scores in reading were included.

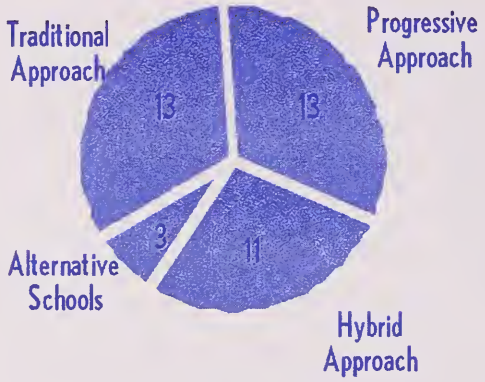
Math/Reading Combination



Since some schools do not report separate math and reading scores, overall scores that combine math and reading were also analyzed for 36 classes at seven additional schools. Fully half (52 percent) of classes reported large increases, posting test scores that improved by more than three percentage points over the course of a year. Eleven percent reported scores that rose slightly, while seventeen percent reported scores that dropped slightly. Only seven classes (20 percent) reported scores that fell by more than three points.

School Approaches and Characteristics

Diverse Philosophies



Massachusetts charter schools drew upon a variety of approaches to learning, reflecting the diversity of beliefs and visions that drove the founders of these 37 schools. Thirteen of the 37 report using a traditional, structured approach to education. Another thirteen report primarily using an interdisciplinary approach in which schoolwork is designed around projects, portfolios, or essential questions. Ten of the 37 combine these approaches into their own unique hybrid of project-based and structured learning. Three high schools provide alternative programs that serve out-of-school youth.

Emphasis on Community

Alongside their curricular programs, schools take a number of approaches to building community and character. A sizeable majority of schools require their students to perform some community service, either within the school or in the outside community. Many schools boast creative and well-developed character development programs, ranging from the memorization of the eighteen phrases of the Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School's credo, to the participation in local town meetings by students at Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School.

Dress Policy

Dress Code	5 schools
Uniforms	14 schools

A common approach to building community is the use of a school uniform policy. Nineteen schools report some dress code policy, with fourteen requiring students to wear school uniforms.

School Meetings

Every Day	4 schools
Every Week	19 schools
Every Month	8 schools
Less than Once a Month	6 schools

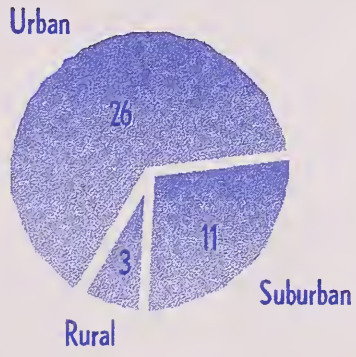
Almost every school also uses regular meetings of their student body as a method of building community within the school. All but four schools report holding such meetings. Four schools do so every day; an additional 19 bring their student body together at least once a week; and eight more bring their students together at least once a month.

Demanding Programs

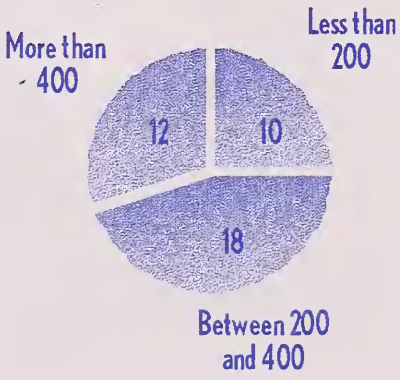
Many charter schools have a reputation for providing a more rigorous and demanding education than is available elsewhere. If time spent in school is a gauge, then many of these schools are indeed demanding more than most other schools. Nineteen of these schools had a school year longer than the 180 days provided by traditional public schools. Sixteen had a school day more than seven hours long.

More than seven-hour school day	16 schools
More than 180-day school year	19 schools

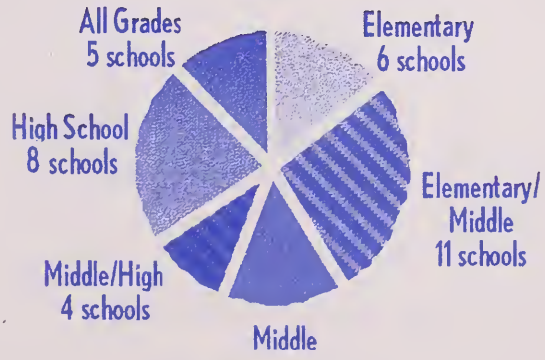
School Location, 2000-01



School Size, 2000-01



Grades Served at Capacity, 2000-01

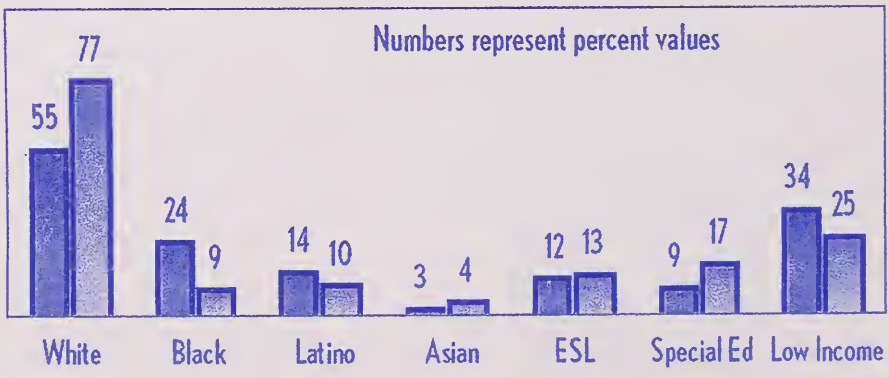


Charter schools came in a variety of shapes and sizes across Massachusetts. The pie charts above and at left illustrate some of this variety. Schools ranged in size from 60 students at Conservatory Lab to more than 1,000 at Boston Renaissance. The most typical school was located in an urban area, enrolled between 150 and 300 students, and served elementary through middle schools (grades K-8).

Populations Served

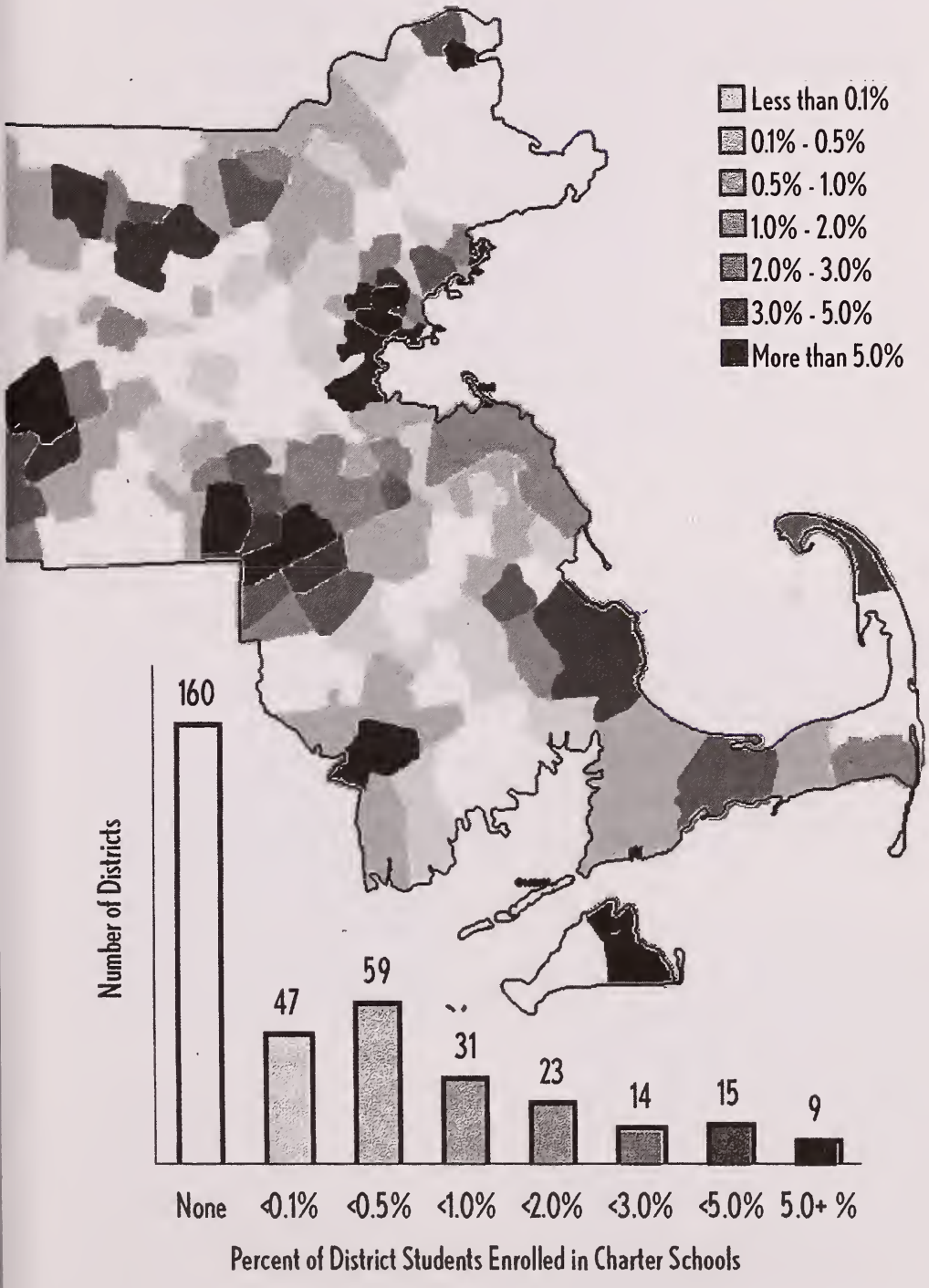
Percent of District Population Enrolled in Charter Schools

Student Demographics



Statewide demographics reflect a greater tendency among charter schools to enroll low-income and minority students. Thirty-four percent of charter school students qualified for free or reduced lunch, compared to 25 percent of public school students statewide. Charter schools enrolled twice as many black and Latino students as other public schools in the state (38 percent compared to 19 percent).

■ Charter Schools ☐ All Public Schools



In the 2000-01 school year, 55 percent (198) of Massachusetts school districts sent at least one student to a charter school. In the majority (106) of these districts, less than 0.5 percent of the district's population is in charter schools. At the other end of the scale, only nine districts had more than five percent of their student population in charter schools.

Faculty and Resources

Charter schools reported employing 1,102 full-time equivalent faculty on staff in 1999-2000. Approximately 635 of these teachers hold Massachusetts certification. At the typical school, there were 25 faculty on staff, with an average of 6.4 years teaching experience, assisted by 32 computers available to students and a library of at least a few hundred volumes.

Building Resources

Depending on the quality of their facilities and the amount of space available, some schools are able to offer students art rooms (73 percent of schools), playgrounds (54 percent of schools) or science labs (30 percent of schools).

Art Room: 73%

Athletic Field: 27%

Auditorium: 54%

Computer Lab: 70%

Gym: 38%

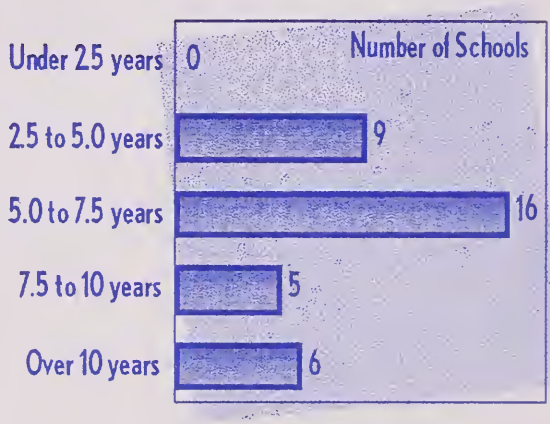
Library: 62%

Music Room: 41%

Playground: 54%

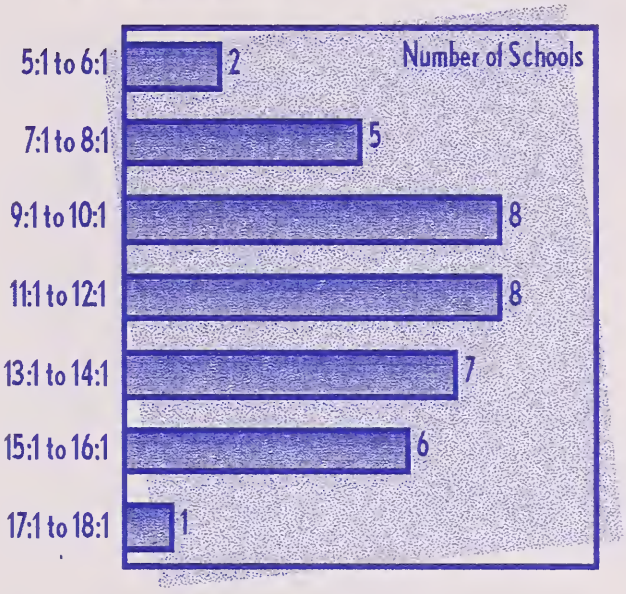
Science Lab: 30%

Teaching Experience of Faculty



At the typical charter school, teaching staff have an average of 6.4 years of teaching experience. As illustrated in the graph above, it is most common for schools to report an average of 5.0 to 7.5 years of teaching experience among their faculty. One out of six schools report more than 10 years experience. At the low end, one out of four schools report a young staff with 2.5 to 5.0 years average experience. No schools employ a staff with an average of less than 2.5 years experience.

Student:Teacher Ratio



On average, charter schools reported one teacher on staff for every eleven students enrolled. The vast majority of schools fell close to this range, with half of schools reporting between 9:1 and 13:1. At the low end of the scale, two schools reported a ratio of one faculty member on staff for every six students. No schools reported more than a ratio of 17:1, reflecting the strong emphasis all of these schools place on low student:teacher ratios.

Faculty Salaries: $27,750 - $44,420

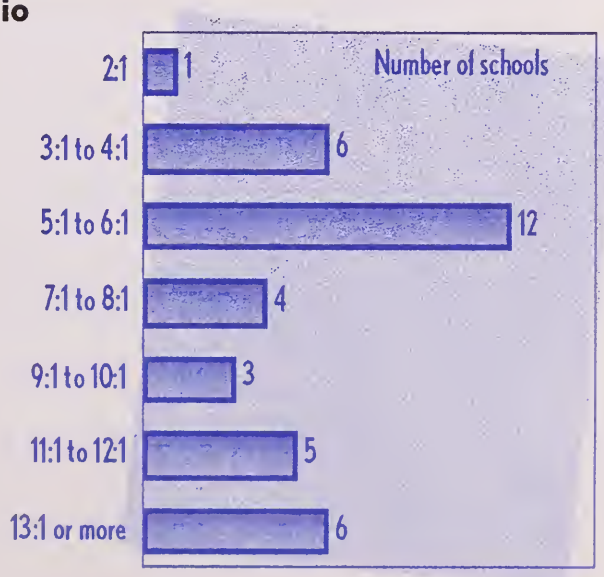
On average, schools reported their lowest faculty salary to be $27,750 and their highest faculty salary to be $44,420.

Percent of Faculty Certified: 61%

On average, schools report that 61 percent of their teaching faculty hold a teaching certification.

Student:Computer Ratio

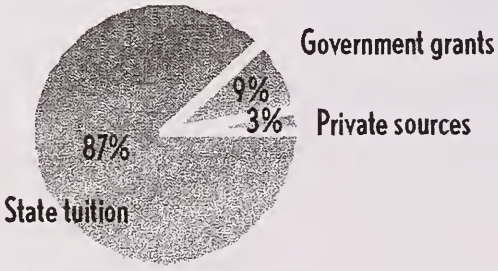
On average, charter schools reported one computer for every six students. Seven schools report at least one computer for every four students. Media and Technology Charter High—a new school whose data does not appear here—reports a one-to-one ratio. At the other end of the scale are a handful of schools that have not put the same emphasis on technology, six of which have less than one computer for every 13 students.



Charter School Finances

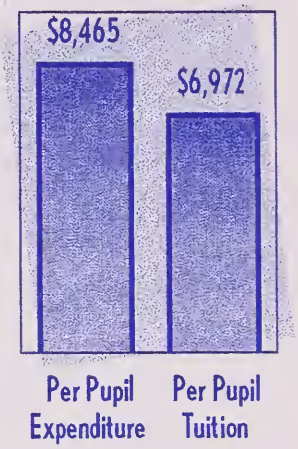
The data in this section is compiled and estimated based on the annual reports and, when possible, audited financial statements, of 37 charter school operating in 1999-2000.

Sources of Revenue



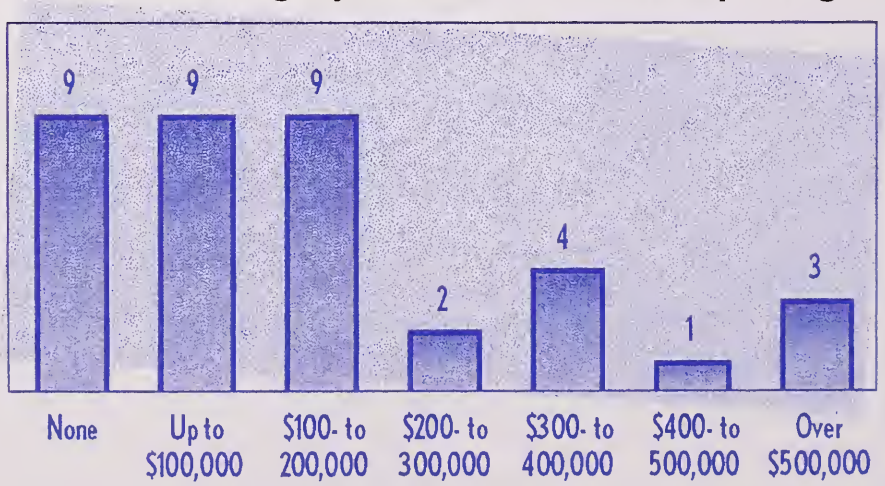
Charter schools get the vast majority of their revenues from state tuition, averaging 87 percent of revenues. On average, an additional 9 percent of revenues comes from government grants, largely through the Title I and Special Education. An additional 3 percent comes from private fundraising.

Spending Per Pupil



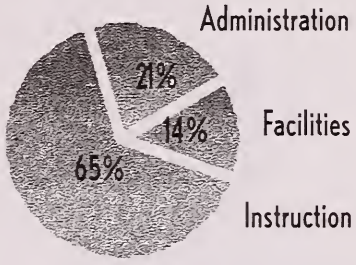
The average charter school spent $8,465 per pupil in the 1999-2000 school year. The largest portion of this spending came from the per pupil tuition amount provided to each charter school based on enrollment. On average, schools received $6,972 per pupil.

Private Fundraising, by Number of Schools Reporting



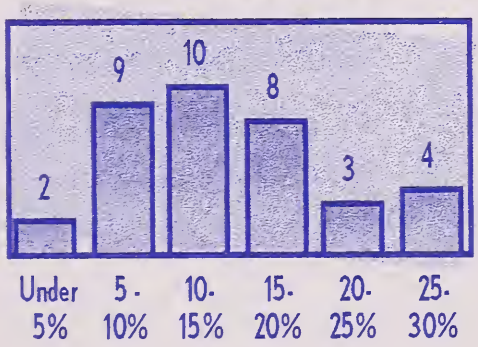
Of 37 schools reporting data, nine reported engaging in no private fundraising, another nine reported raising up to $100,000 from private contributors, and another nine schools reported raising $100- to $200,000 from private sources. The remaining ten schools reported from $200,000 to as much as $657,000.

Budget Allocation



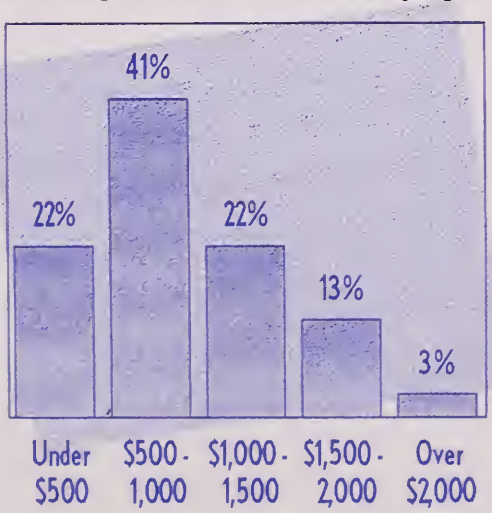
At the average charter school, about 65 cents on every dollar is spent on instruction, largely through faculty salaries. About 21 cents on every dollar is spent on administration, which includes administrative salaries as well as supplies and services necessary for administrative responsibilities. This leaves fully 14 cents on every dollar that is devoted to facility financing, including occupancy, maintenance, and utilities costs.

Percent of Budget Spent on Facilities, by Schools Reporting



One of the largest costs for charter schools is that of securing and maintaining a school facility. Ten schools report spending 10 to 15 percent of their budget on facilities, with 7 schools spending more than 20 percent. At the upper end, River Valley Charter School, a relatively new school that has helped to construct a building in which the school is housed, spent 28 percent of its budget on facilities.

Facility Cost Per Student, by Percent of Schools Reporting



The largest portion of facilities costs is that of renting or leasing space. Most schools (41 percent) spend $500 to $1,000 per student. Nearly as many schools (38 percent) spend more than $1,000 per student.

6 Charter School Profiles, 1999-2000

Neighborhood House Charter School

School Profiles: Introduction and Explanations

This chapter provides a profile of each of the 37 charter schools that were in operation in Massachusetts during the 1999-2000 school year and continues to operate in 2001. (Two schools that were unable to meet the state's standards of accountability returned their charters during the 1999-2000 school year per agreement between their Board of Trustees and the Board of Education. These schools are not included in this chapter.)

Before viewing the profiles, readers are encouraged to read the following important background on comparing districts and interpreting academic progress.

Each school profile presents student demographics and MCAS scores for three comparison groups: the school, a "comparable composite district," and the state. This is provided to help the reader make reasonable comparisons between the school and others in the state.

Comparing Districts

The third page of each school profile presents student demographics and MCAS scores for three comparison groups: the school, a "comparable composite district," and the state. This is provided to help the reader compare the school and its student body to others in the same local community, and to the statewide average. The "comparable composite district" represents a composite of the districts in which the school's students reside. For instance, if a school enrolls 100 students, 75 of whom are from Boston and 25 of whom are from Cambridge, then the comparable composite district will be calculated by adding 75 percent of the data from Boston to 25 percent of the data from Cambridge.

Interpreting Academic Progress

The fourth page of each school profile presents a rough gauge of academic progress at the school. This is provided to illustrate some of the growth that students at the school have made over time. A pair of bars represents the average score for a class on a particular test at two points in time. If the bar on the right is the same height as the bar on the left, then the average score for students in that class increased the amount that it would be expected to increase over the time given.

For example, imagine that Charter School X is a K-8 school that enrolls 30 students in its sixth grade class. These students will graduate in 2002, and are therefore identified as the Class of 2002. In 1999, when these students were in the fifth grade, they took the Stanford-9 and posted an average score in the 60th percentile, meaning that they scored higher than 60 percent of fifth graders. Over the next year, if these students learn at the average rate for fifth graders, then when they take the test a year later, they can be expected to again score in the 60th percentile, meaning that they are now scoring higher than 60 percent of sixth graders. This does *not* mean that students are still at a fifth grade level, but rather indicates that they have progressed in one year by the amount to reach a sixth grade level. This is "expected" progress.

Readers are cautioned to be careful in interpreting data on academic achievement. The scores are based on only one source and they are often drawn from a small group of students.

At the majority of charter schools in Massachusetts, classes have progressed at a faster rate than expected. This means that the fifth graders at Charter School X who scored in the 60th percentile would progress more than expected to, for instance, the 65th percentile as sixth graders. This would appear as a graph with the bar on the right higher than the bar on the left.

In some cases, classes have made less than expected progress. This does *not* mean that those classes have moved backwards. Rather, it means that they have moved forward at a slower rate than "expected." For instance, if students were in the 60th percentile in fifth grade, they may now be in the 58th percentile as sixth graders.

Caution to Readers

Readers are cautioned to be careful in interpreting data on academic achievement. There are several reasons for this caution.

First, for virtually all schools, the scores reported here represent only one test, usually over only one or two periods of time. A better picture of academic achievement comes from multiple assessments over several years.

Second, many charter schools have small classes and are therefore testing a small number of students. As a result, a large change in just one or two students' test scores can affect the average for an entire class, a situation which can be potentially misleading.

Similarly, testing the same class from year to year does not ensure that the exact same students are tested from year to year. If just one or two students leave or join a class, or one or two students are not tested, the changed or missing test scores will affect the entire class average.

First Page of Profile. Following is a brief overview of the information that appears on the first page of each school profile.

Charter Type and Status. The type of charter held by the school (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) and the year in which the charter was granted or renewed by the Board of Education.

Opened. Year in which the school first opened its doors to students. Normally within six to eighteen months of receiving its charter.

Location. District from which the school draws its students. Regional schools draw students from a multi-district region including the region in which they are located.

Grades Served. Grades served by the charter school in the 1999-2000 school year. Many schools expand by adding one grade each year until they reach full size (indicated on second page of the profile).

Enrollment. Reported student enrollment in the 1999-2000 school year.

Waiting List. Number of students reported on school waiting list in the 1999-2000 year.

Application Rate. Number of applications for admission received for each student admitted in 1999-2000. For example, if the school received 75 applications and admitted 25 students, then the that school would have an application rate of 3.0.

In-District Transfer Rate. Percentage of students enrolled in 1999-2000 who transferred out of the school during or at the end of that school year for a reason other than graduation or relocation to an ineligible school district. For example, if the school had an enrollment of 100 students at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year and at the beginning of the 2000-01

school year, 10 of those students had left to attend another school within the same district, then that school would have a 10% in-district transfer rate.

Second Page of Profile. Following is a brief overview of the information that appears on the second page of each school profile.

Student:Teacher Ratio. Ratio of student enrollment to total number of full-time equivalent faculty, including classroom teachers as well as specialists. This is not equivalent to classroom size, which is larger than student:teacher ratio, but tends to be related to it.

Average Experience. Average number of years of teaching experience among school's teaching faculty.

Budget. School's total expenditures for the 1999-2000 school year.

Per Pupil Expenditures. School budget (see above) divided by school enrollment. For instance, a school that spent $1,000,000 and had an enrollment of 100 students would have $10,000 in per pupil expenditures. Typically, per pupil expenditures include a tuition amount paid to the school based on its enrollment, government grants based on the particular population the school serves, as well as other public and private contributions.

Average Per Pupil Tuition. Tuition funding is provided by the state (to Commonwealth charter schools) or the district (to Horace Mann charter schools) to compensate for instruction and transportation for enrolled students. This figure is divided by enrollment for average per pupil tuition. For example, a school that received $800,000 from the State for 100 students would have an average per pupil tuition of $8,000. Note that tuition does not include government grants for special education and low-income students, which often contribute substantially to per pupil expenditures (see above).

Administration/Facilities/Instruction. Estimates based on school's annual report or audited financial statements, dividing budget into administrative, facilities, and instructional expenses. *Facilities* includes occupancy, maintenance, and utilities costs, as well as capital financing, if applicable. *Instruction* includes faculty salaries and benefits and additional services and supplies to support instruction. *Administration* includes administrative salaries and benefits and related costs.

Curricular Philosophy. Brief description of central component of school's curricular philosophy. More full discussion of curricular approach is provided in text of school description.

Size at Full Capacity. Anticipated grade levels served when school is at full capacity. Many schools are in the process of expanding one grade level per year until reaching full capacity. Others have already reached full capacity.

Length of School Year. Number of days in school year for students. State minimum is 180 days.

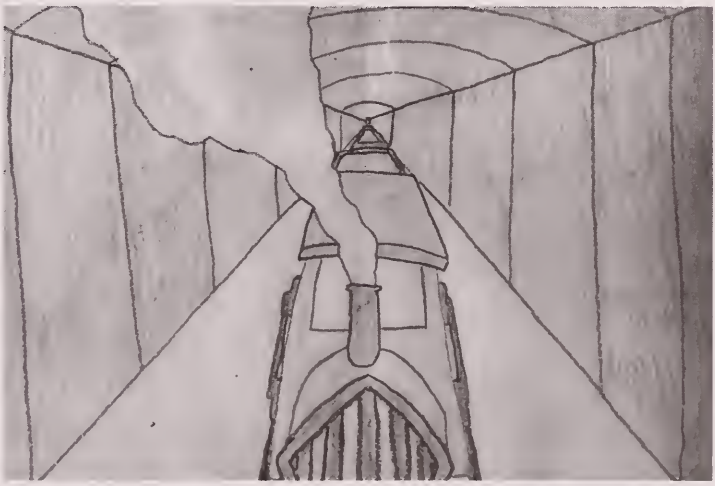
Length of School Day. Hours of operation of curricular school day. Most schools also provide after-school activities and some provide before-school activities. These are not included in length of school day.

School Meetings. Occurrence of meetings that bring together all or most (as indicated) of the school community.

Student Dress Code. School policy, if any, requiring students to follow dress code or wear uniforms.

Library. Approximate holdings of school library, if any.

Computers. Ratio of computers available for student use to student enrollment. For example, if a school enrolls 500 students and offers 100 computers for student use, then it has a 5:1 student:computer ratio.



"Train," by Brian Curran, sixth grade, South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School.

Management Contract. Non-profit or for-profit management company (if any) holding major contract to provide administrative and/or educational services to Board of Trustees.

Third Page of Profile.

Following is a brief overview of the information that appears on the third page of each school profile.

Statewide Average. Average for all students enrolled in public schools in Massachusetts.

District Average. Weighted average of data from all districts sending students to the charter school. For example, if a school enrolls 100 students, 75 of whom are from Boston and 25 of whom are from Cambridge, then the comparable composite district will be calculated by adding 75 percent of the data from Boston to 25 percent of the data from Cambridge. This composite district has been used in order to make comparison between students in the same geographic community possible.

MCAS (1999-2000). Comparison of school MCAS scores against those of students from a comparable composite district and statewide scores.

Student Demographics. Percentage of students enrolled in the charter school, comparable composite district, and state bearing specified characteristics.

Bilingual. Students for whom English is not their fist language.

Special Ed. Students identified for inclusion in special education program and holding written Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Note that several charter schools provide special services to students who do not hold IEPs, and may serve students whose parents have chosen to waive their IEPs for this reason. This is not recorded in the data presented here.

Low Income. Students eligible for free or reduced lunch under the federal Title I program.

Fourth Page of Profile.

Following is a brief overview of the information that appears on the fourth page of each school profile.

Academic Progress. One or more graphs have been included based on student achievement data reported by each school. Every effort has been made to represent these graphs accurately in a way that is the same for every school.

Touching bars represent scores on the same test administered at two points in time to the same class of students. The height of these bars is the same if students registered expected progress from this beginning of that time period to the end. For example, if students in fifth grade take a test in fall of 1999 and take the tests again as sixth graders in the fall of 2000, expected progress is defined as one year growth. If the right bar is shorter than the left bar, class scores did not increase at the rate that would be expected over the given time period. If the right bar is taller than the left bar, class scores increased at a rate greater than would be expected for normal progress.

Because charter schools have the freedom to administer any tests and report these in any way that they feel is most appropriate, scores are reported on a variety of different tests in a variety of different ways. The most common test used by schools is the Stanford-9, a norm-referenced test that is administered nationwide. The majority of schools report scores on other tests that are also administered nationally and norm-referenced, including the California Achievement Test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and the Terra Nova. Some schools also report internal measures developed to more accurately reflect the school's particular curricular philosophy.

Questions about the School Profiles

Where does the information in the school profiles come from?

The Charter School Office relies on three sources for the information that appears in the school profiles. First, at the end of each school year, every charter school submits an annual report. Much of the information in the profiles is drawn from the schools' 1999-2000 annual reports. Second, every charter school submits an annual financial audit. These audits were used for some of the financial data. Third, the Department of Education collects data from all schools in the state on MCAS scores and school demographics.

Why do most schools report higher expenditures than tuition? Are they operating at a deficit?

Almost every charter school has a higher per pupil expenditure rate than its per pupil tuition. This does not mean the school is operating at a deficit. Rather, it reflects the fact that on average 13 percent of school revenue comes from sources other than per pupil tuition. Virtually every school receives government grants to serve students with special needs and students in low-income families. About three-quarters of schools augment this amount through private contributions. By adding these funds to their per pupil tuition, schools are able to spend more.

In reporting student demographics, which students count as special education?

Special education students are those who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for which the school receives funding from the federal government. Note that some schools provide the equivalent of "special education" services to their students, but give parents the option of waiving the students' IEPs. In these cases, students will not appear in figures on special edu-

cation despite the fact that they are receiving services normally called for in IEPs.

Why are charter schools compared to a "district average"?

Every student enrolled in a charter school lives in one of the state's school districts. This is described as that student's "sending district." At some charter schools, all students live in one sending district. In order to make as accurate a comparison as possible between a charter school and its district, we calculate a "comparable composite district." This is a weighted average of the characteristics of all of the school's sending districts.

For instance, every student at Champion Charter School is from Brockton. As a result, the "comparable composite district" for Champion is Brockton. However, at many schools, students live in several districts. For instance, at Benjamin Banneker Charter School in Cambridge, 58 percent of the students live in Cambridge, 20 percent live in Boston, and the remaining 22 percent live in thirteen other districts. For Banneker, the "comparable composite district" has 58 percent of the characteristics of Cambridge, 20 percent of Boston, six percent from Somerville, five percent from Malden, and so on.

How is data on academic progress collected?

Every charter school must track it students' academic progress, and has the freedom to determine the most appropriate data to collect in order to gauge student performance. The data we use in this report to describe academic progress has been gathered by each school independently based on that school's decision of how it would be held accountable for results. Many schools reports results on external tests such as the Stanford-9, California Achievement Test, or Metropolitan Achievement test. In a few cases, schools have developed internal measures that provide a consistent source of data to track student progress.

Why is academic achievement reported in terms of progress, rather than absolute standing?

The 37 charter schools profiled here serve a broad diversity of students. Some serve out-of-school youth who have traditionally struggled in school, and can be expected to enter school well below grade level. Others serve children in communities that have traditionally done better than average, and might be expected to enter school at or above grade level. If we are trying to gauge how much schools are helping their students, then a comparison of students in such different situations can be difficult. For instance, given two students who are at grade level, it might appear that a school has benefited both students equally. However, if one of those students began the year two grade levels behind, that student has made great progress. If the other student began the year a grade level ahead, that student has done quite poorly.

In order to control for students' diverse starting points, we consider academic standing longitudinally, tracking the progress a group of students has made over at least two points in time. If in the course of a year, a group of students has made about one year of growth—regardless of where those students began—then they are said to be making normal progress. If the students end the year further ahead than they began—even if their absolute standing is below average—then they are said to be making above normal progress. If the students end further behind than they began—even if their absolute standing is above average—then they are said to be making below normal progress.

Why is data on academic achievement reported by graduating class?

Whenever possible, we have reported test scores for the same class of students at two points in time. For instance, if a school assesses students every spring, we compare the scores of fourth graders in 1999 with those of fifth graders in 2000. By doing this, we are tracking the same group of students to assess their progress over time. If, on the other hand, we compared fourth graders in 1999 with fourth graders in 2000, we would be comparing two different groups of students who may have very different characteristics. It is worth noting that even when such cohort analysis is used, there is

some chance of turnover from one year to the next as a result of student transfers or related changes in enrollment. The only schools reported here that have controlled for changes in the student population are Boston Renaissance and the Somerville Charter School.

What is considered "expected" progress?

For the purposes of the data reported in the school profiles, a class of students is said to be making "expected" progress if the scores for that class improve by about the amount that they are expected to improve over time. We have illustrated this with graphs in which bars of the same height reflect normal progress over time.

In most cases, schools report normal curve equivalent scores on standardized tests. On such norm-referenced tests, a student is considered to have made normal progress if his or her score remains the same over time. For instance, a third grader who scores in the 60th percentile has done better than 60 percent of her peers. If that third grader scores a 60 again one year later, she has once again done better than 60 percent of her peers.

Some schools report grade level equivalent scores on standardized tests. Grade level equivalents are expected to change over time. A third grader who takes a test in September is expected to be at a grade level equivalent of 3.0. One year later, she is expected to be at a grade level equivalent of 4.0. In the school profile, we report grade level equivalent scores with respect to the norm. For instance, if that third grader scored at a 3.8 grade level, her score with respect to the norm is +0.8. To post normal progress, she would have to score a 4.8 when she takes the same test as a fourth grader, giving her a consistent score of +0.8 with respect to the norm.

Finally, some schools report internal measures. These measures are not norm-referenced and there are generally too few students taking the test for a meaningful comparison to be made to normal progress. Instead, we assume that the assessment method used is consistent over time, so that a score of 75 on the internal measure in grade three indicates the same standing for a third grader as a grade of 75 on the internal measure in grade four would indicate for a fourth grader.

Does "less than expected" progress mean that student scores have declined?

No. When a class posts less than expected progress, it does *not* necessarily mean that student scores have declined. It is more likely that student scores have increased, but not at the rate that they are normally expected to increase over time. For instance, a third grader who starts the year at a 3.8 grade level and ends the year at a 4.0 grade level has increased her score by 0.2 years. However, since students are expected to improve by 0.9 year over the course of a school year, that student is said to have shown less than expected progress.

What if I want to get more information about a school?

Every school profile includes key contact information for that school. To get more information on a school, just get in touch with them!

Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Worcester (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-6
Enrollment, 1999-2000	636
Waiting List, 1999-2000	255
Application Rate, 1999-2000	8.2
In-District Transfer Rate	12.3%

School Leader: Doris Schroeder
10 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA 01606
Tel: 508 854 8400 Fax: 508 854 8484 E-mail: dschroeder@akfcs.org
http://www.akfcs.com

Mission. The mission of the Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School is to attain the highest standards in teaching students to pursue the truth and to learn about the world; to love the good by growing in good character and civic virtue; and to cultivate what is beautiful in thought, word, action, and sense. In this mission the school assists parents, who are the primary educators of their children; and it exercises stewardship by passing on to a new generation the treasures of knowledge and culture we have received from the past.

In a survey of parents, Abby Kelley Foster received high ratings, with 95 percent rating the curriculum as good to excellent and 80 percent rating their experience as better than with other schools.

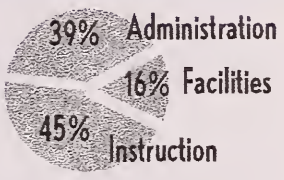
Description. Housed in a renovated mill building in Worcester, the Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School provides students with an environment that emphasizes the strength and structure of a rigorous academic program. Abby Kelley employs Direct Instruction, a highly structured, mastery-based curriculum. Direct Instruction is designed to teach basic skills as well as more complex analytic strategies and competencies using a brisk pace and high level of interaction between teachers and students—the school estimates that there are more than 200 answers given by students in every class period.

Students receive instruction in elementary reading, language, and mathematics in small instructional groups that are formed based on academic performance. Groups are adjusted regularly depending on students' individual progress. Students can progress to higher groups only after they have demonstrated mastery of at least 90 percent of the skills and knowledge for their group.

Students also receive instruction in science, history, French, music, art, physical fitness, and Latin. In each area, the school uses a curriculum structured around commercially available materials aligned with the MA Frameworks.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	15:1
Average Experience	3 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$5,039,243
Expenditures Per Pupil	$7,923
State Tuition Per Pupil	$7,243



Music plays an important role in the weekly schedule, with three full-time music teachers providing vocal and instrumental instruction for all students beginning in third grade. Rounding out this rigorous education, the school offers a character education program that focuses on the values of responsibility, kindness, friendship, and perseverance.

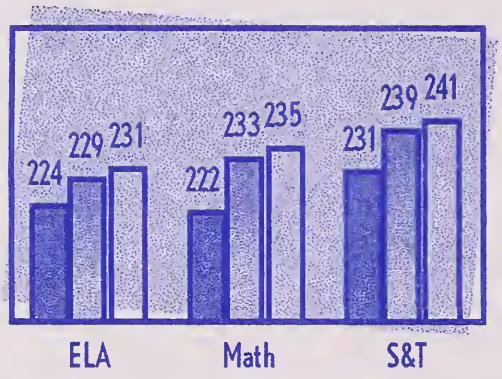
Origin. Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School was founded by a group of community leaders in Worcester, including two college professors, an accountant, an attorney, two social workers, and a local businessman. The school was named after Abby Kelley Foster, a nineteenth-century Worcester resident who was a leader in the abolitionist and women's rights movements.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Direct Instruction (Highly structured)
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades K-12 in 2005
Length of School Year	200 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:30
School Meetings	No regular student meetings
Student Dress Code	Uniform
Library	4,400 volumes
Computers	14:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	None

Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter School

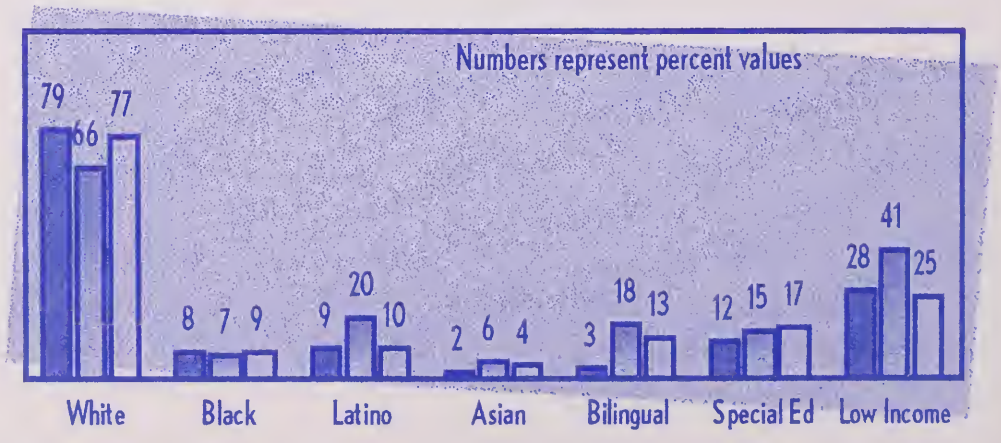
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students being outperformed by their counterparts in the surrounding district by five to eleven points in English/Language Arts, Math, and Science and Technology.

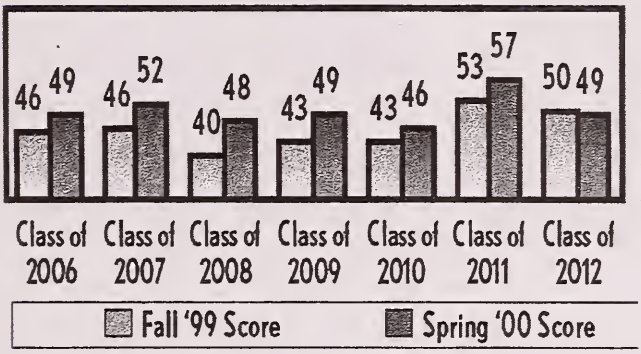
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

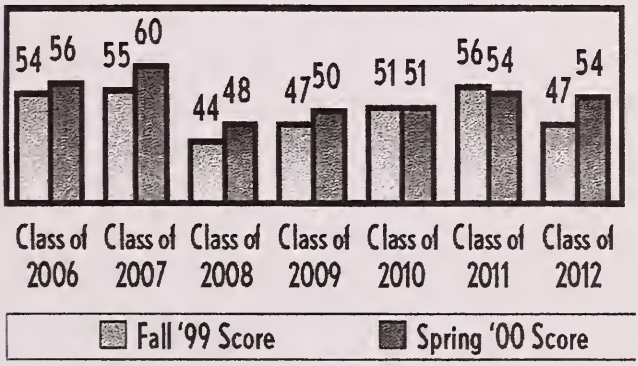
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Math, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



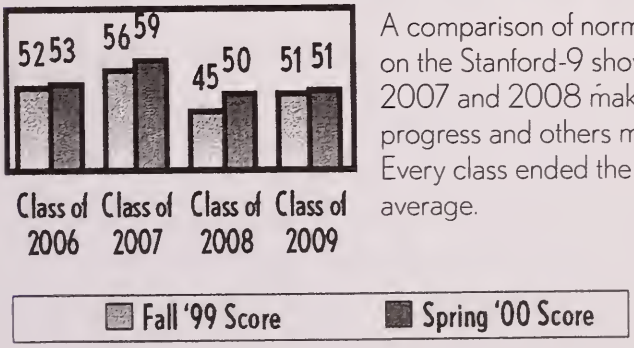
A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students in every class except the youngest making greater than expected progress. The Classes of 2007, 2008, and 2009 showed significantly strong progress.

Language, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows every class except 2010 and 2011 making greater than expected progress. The Class of 2007 showed significantly strong progress. All but one class ended the year at or above the national average.

Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students in the Classes of 2007 and 2008 making greater than expected progress and others making expected progress. Every class ended the year at or above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1995

Opened	1997
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	6-9
Enrollment, 1999-2000	190
Waiting List, 1999-2000	152
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.9
In-District Transfer Rate	8.4%

School Leader: Spencer Blasdale
One Westinghouse Plaza, Hyde Park, MA 02136
Tel: 617 361 0050 Fax: 617 361 0045
http://www.pacrim.org

Mission. The mission of the Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School is to empower urban students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to achieve their full intellectual potential by combining the best of the East—high standards, discipline, and character education—with the best of the West—a commitment to individualism, creativity, and diversity.

Description. The Academy of the Pacific Rim is built upon the belief that all young people, not just the privileged or exceptionally gifted, can achieve the highest levels of success and accomplishment. Effort, character and commitment, not innate ability, are the ultimate determinates of success. The school succeeds by borrowing and adapting the best ideas from schools around the world, most notably those in Asia. In 1999-2000, a team of six faculty members spent six months renewing the school's stock of innovative ideas and techniques by researching practices in Asian schools.

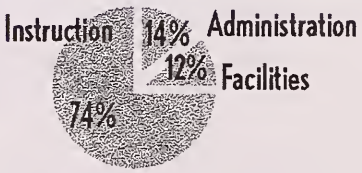
In 1999-2000, a team of six faculty members spent six months renewing the school's stock of innovative ideas and techniques by researching practices in Asian schools.

All Academy students study English, history, math, and science in 55-minute blocks every day. All students participate in physical education.

Additionally, all sixth grade students attend classes in reading and study skills. Students in grades seven and higher also study Mandarin Chinese as their foreign language. This rigorous academic program is complemented by a strict promotion policy. Students must pass each core academic course in each trimester with a minimum 70 percent average to be promoted to the next grade. Since grades in all courses are based on assessments of specific academic standards, promotion is therefore based directly upon student mastery of information, and the school regularly holds back children who do not meet this standard.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	5.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,767,707
Per Pupil Expenditures	$9,304
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,568



Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the Academy is the school's classroom management system. This system fosters a culture of support and respect felt throughout the community, most dramatically among its students.

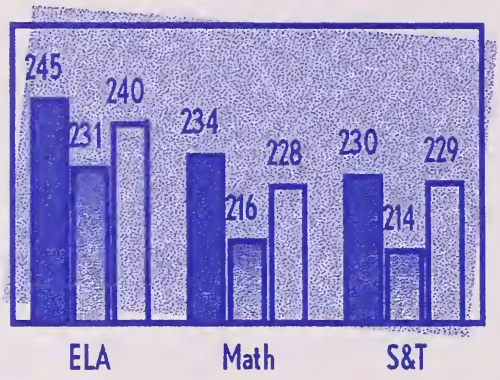
Origin. The Academy was founded by a diverse, grassroots coalition of parents, educators, community activists, academics, and professionals. The group included members of local neighborhood organizations as well as representatives of New England Medical Center, Harvard and its graduate schools, and Tufts University. "We want to take the best of Asian education and culture," the school's board chair said on its founding, "to create a Boston public school that believes success is achieved by effort, not ability."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Individualized, structured instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 6-12 in 2002
Length of School Year	210 days
Length of School Day	8:05-4:10
School Meetings	Daily
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	200 volumes
Computers	10:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School

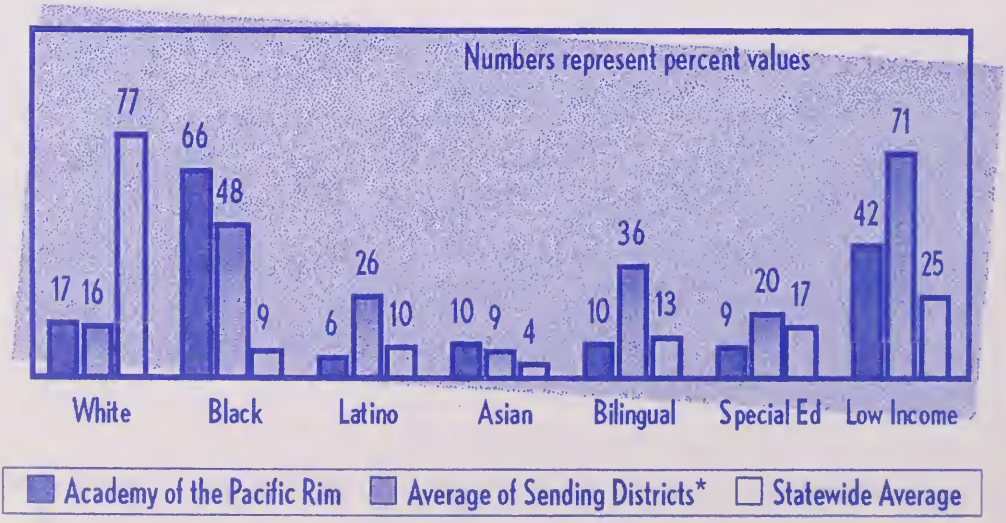
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students outperforming their counterparts in the surrounding district in English/Language Arts, Math, and Science and Technology, by a wide margin in every subject.

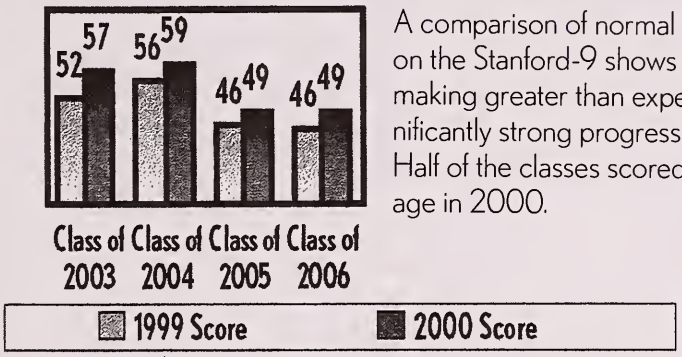
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

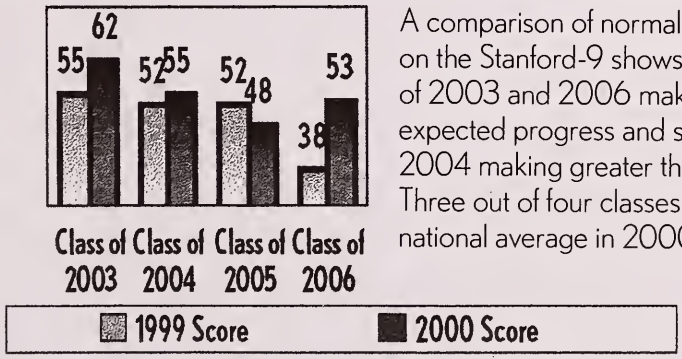
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students in every grade making greater than expected progress, with significantly strong progress in the Class of 2003. Half of the classes scored above the national average in 2000.

Math, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students in the Classes of 2003 and 2006 making much greater than expected progress and students in the Class of 2004 making greater than expected progress. Three out of four classes scored above the national average in 2000.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Atlantis Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Fall River
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	536
Waiting List, 1999-2000	374
Application Rate, 1999-2000	13.2
In-District Transfer Rate	2.2%

School Leader: Fernando Goulart
2501 Main Street, Fall River, MA 02724
Tel: 508 672 1821 Fax: 508 672 1397 E-mail: fmg@atlantiscs.org
http://www.atlantiscs.org

Mission. The mission of the Atlantis Charter School is to provide all children with an education that is second to none, so they can become adaptable and productive life-long learners.

Description. Atlantis Charter School's core academic curriculum links academic preparation for college with skill development for the 21st century. It is based on competency levels to assure that students develop ten skills that the school has identified as critical for success in the 21st century: critical thinking, writing, speaking, listening, decision-making problem-solving, information-gathering, as well as computer technology, creative expression, and interpersonal skills.

Atlantis Charter School implemented an innovative new peacemaking skills and peer mediation program in the 1999-2000 school year, providing training for 27 students and 12 teachers.

The school employs a variety of methods to teach students these skills, including project demonstrations, peer coaching, and the development of student portfolios. Students participate in service-based experiences in the surrounding community, including a variety of projects using the Atlantic's

coastal habitat as a natural laboratory for the study of marine science. In addition, Atlantis implemented an innovative new peacemaking skills and peer mediation program in the 1999-2000 school year, providing training for 27 students and 12 teachers.

Community and parent involvement also play a large role in Atlantis' approach to education. Joint goals for parents, students, and teachers are formalized in a Home and School Involvement Compact, and teachers discuss Progress Reports and Narrative Reports on each student with families at the end of each trimester. The school's Family Learning Center sponsors family activities and discussion sessions and provides a variety of resources, including a library for parents and lending library for children.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	10:1
Average Experience	7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$4,247,656
Per Pupil Expenditure	$7,925
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,902

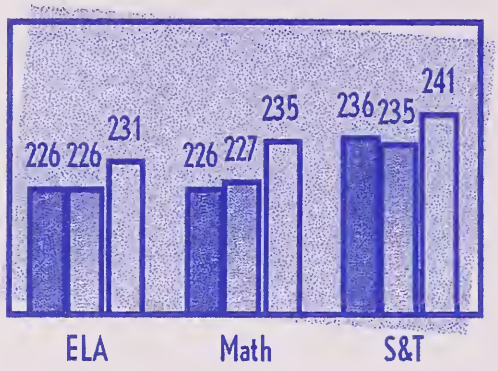
Origin. Atlantis Charter School grew out of the Fall River Regional Task Force and Fall River 2000 community-wide coalitions of public and private sector leaders committed to education reform. In the words of John Correiro, a former Fall River school superintendent who spearheaded the creation of the school, it is designed to be "an alternative education with a new model that pays more than lip service to parent and community involvement."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Skill development and college prep
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	186 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:15
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Dress Code
Library	5,500 volumes
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management	Self managed

Atlantis Charter School

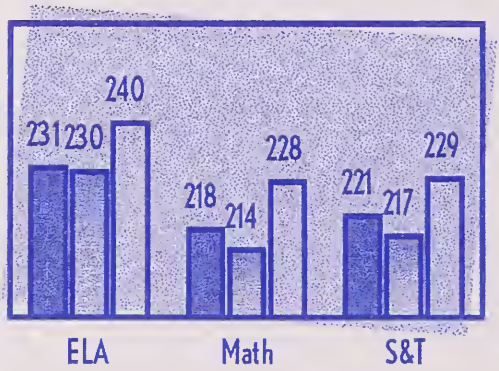
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



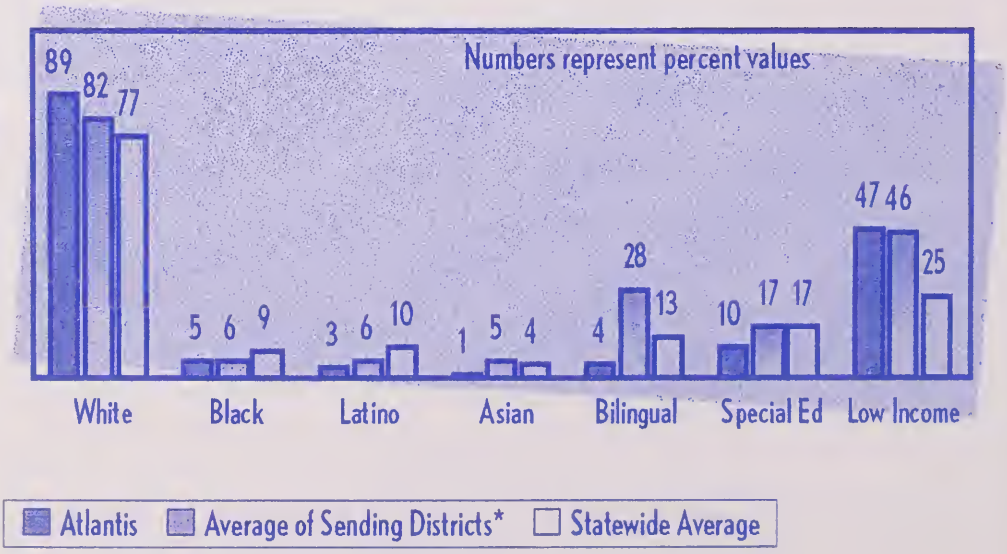
A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to their counterparts in surrounding districts in every subject area.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to their district counterparts in English/Language Arts and four points higher in both Math and Science & Technology.

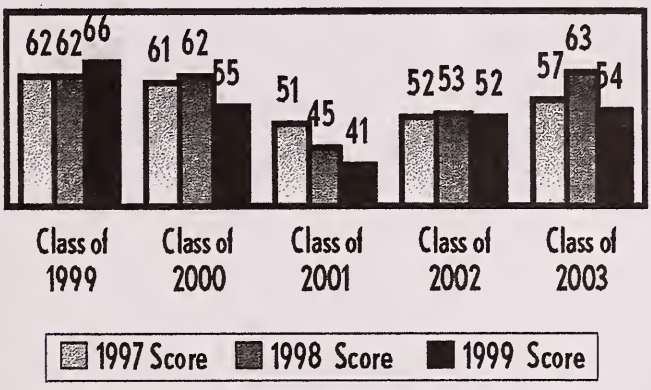
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

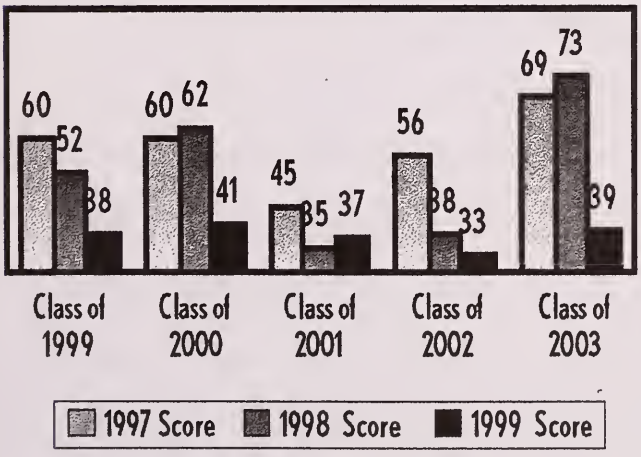
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1997 through 1999



A comparison of national individual percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows classes making expected or greater than expected progress both years in the Class of 1999 and for one out of two years in the Classes of 2000, 2002, and 2003. Five out of six classes were above the national average.

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1997 through 1999



A comparison of national individual percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows classes making less than expected growth from 1997 to 1998 for every class except the Classes of 2000 and 2003, and from 1998 to 1999 for every class except the Class of 2001.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1999 Conversion
Location	Barnstable
Grade Served (1999-2000)	5
Enrollment, 1999-2000	585
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.0
In-District Transfer Rate	0.5%

School Leader: Thomas McDonald
120 High School Road, Barnstable, MA 02601
Tel: 508 790 6234 Fax: 508 790 6373 E-mail: tmcdonal@barnhoracemann.org
http://www.barnhoracemann.org

Mission. The mission of Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School is to inspire all students, faculty, parents, and community members to achieve excellence by creating a school environment that provides a high quality education, utilizing rigorous standards, assessments, innovative and creative instruction, and engaging parents and the community to prepare students for lifelong learning.

Description. The Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School is a one-year school serving all fifth graders in the Town of Barnstable. This unique setup allows the school to have a brief but broad impact, working for 180 days with every student in the school district.

Recognizing the importance of professional development for a well-run school, Barnstable Horace Mann provided all staff with 37 days of training including a five-day Summer Institute in the 1999-2000 school year.

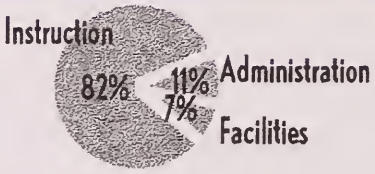
Student performance at the Barnstable School is based on the guiding principal that all children can learn and attain high standards in the core academic subjects. Upon receiving its charter in 1999, the school began a process of restructuring based on the Modern Red Schoolhouse Whole School Design Model. That restructuring is expected to be complete in June of 2003. With this focus, the school is creating a standards-driven curricu-

lum using state-of-the-art instructional methods. Classes are organized around four thematic units that carry through the school year. Recognizing the importance of professional development for a well-run school, Barnstable Horace Mann provided all staff with 37 days of training including a five-day Summer Institute in the 1999-2000 school year.

The school's instructional methods are, in turn, linked with state-of-the-art technology. Every classroom is equipped with two computers; the computer lab provides wireless access to the Internet on 24 computers; and the school gives every teacher a laptop computer and student assessment software.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	14:1
Average Experience	20 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$4,058,402
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,937
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,347



The school is also proud of its program in the arts, with all students attending art and music classes and hundreds of students involved in the school band, winter concert, and school play.

Origin. When the Parent Advisory Council, staff, and community business partners in Barnstable decided that they wanted to increase student achievement in the district, they agreed that an effective way to accomplish this was would be by converting one of the schools to a charter, giving it more freedom to experiment with new teaching methods. The Barnstable Grade Five School was uniquely positioned to do this since it enrolls every student in the district for one year. "We wanted to implement a whole-school design model, bringing standards-driven, comprehensive reform to our district," one of the members of the founding group

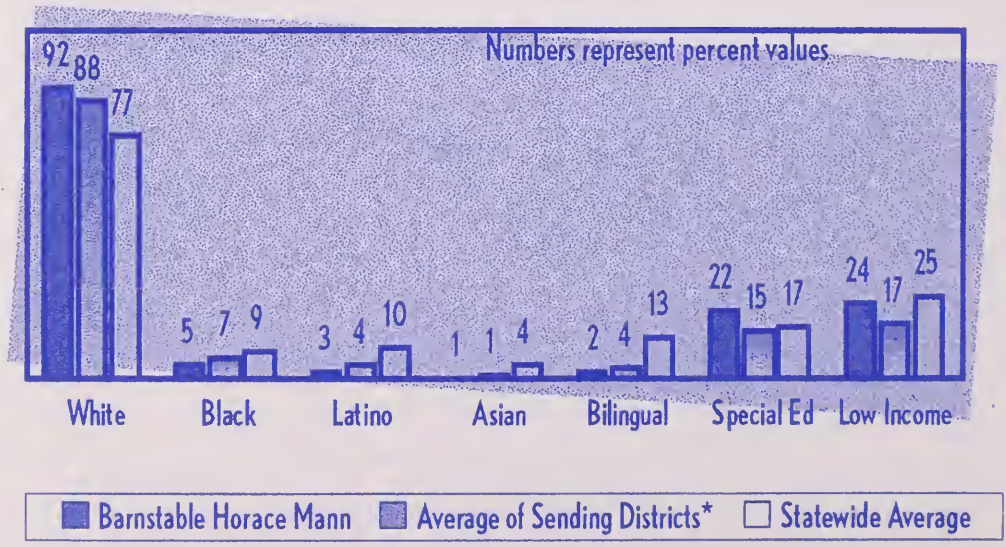
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Modern Red Schoolhouse
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grade 5
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:30-3:05
School Meetings	Bi-weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	5,000 volumes
Computers	2:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Because Barnstable Grade Five Charter School does not serve grades four, eight, or ten, it has no students who take the MCAS exam.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000

A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected growth. The class ended the year above the national average.

Math, Stanford-9 NCE Scores,1999 to 2000

A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected growth. The class ended the year above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Benjamin Banneker Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1995

Opened	1996
Location	Cambridge
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	312
Waiting List, 1999-2000	250
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.7
In-District Transfer Rate	5.8%

School Leader: Fred Birkett
21 Notre Dame Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02142
Tel: 617 497 7771 Fax: 617 497 4223 E-mail: slombara@banneker.org
http://www.banneker.org

Mission. The Benjamin Banneker Charter School is the inspiration of concerned community leaders, parents, and educators, with the common vision and purpose of providing all Cambridge youth, regardless of race, culture, language or socioeconomic status, with a high quality education. At the Benjamin Banneker Charter School, minority, low-income, and disadvantaged children, who are typically stereotyped as innate underachievers, will be challenged to meet their potential. Academically, a strong focus will be placed on overcoming educational problems that typically hold back minority youth.

Demonstrating their academic success, half of Banneker's 26 graduating eighth graders were accepted to highly competitive high schools in 2000, including Boston Latin, Phillips Exeter, and Buckingham Brown and Nichols.

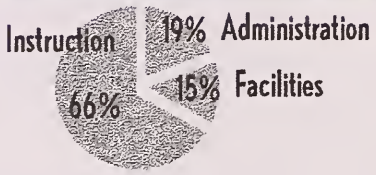
Description. The Benjamin Banneker Charter School employs a variety of curricular approaches and styles with the common goal of providing education that is accessible for children from traditionally disadvantaged groups and backgrounds. The school's science and math curricula draw upon the Massachusetts frameworks as well as district-wide standards used in Boston, Cambridge, California, and New York. To support literacy skills, the school

offers a school-wide literacy program, guided reading in regular classrooms, and reading recovery for students who are having particular difficulty.

The school's various curricular approaches are met with a steady and consistent approach to assessment. Students are assessed on reading, mathematics, and writing through monthly assessments and through benchmark tests administered three times a year. In order to graduate, students must complete an interdisciplinary project, applying lessons learned in school in a real world context. For their interdisciplinary project in 1999-2000, eighth graders used English, math, social studies, science, and technology to research the "Big Dig" in downtown Boston and gave oral presentations to demonstrate learning.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	6:1
Average Experience	4 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$3,800,601
Per Pupil Expenditures	$12,181
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$10,422



Alongside its academic program, Banneker focuses on building students' sense of community with after-school clubs and athletic teams, as well as the Principal's Scholars Program, which provides structured and creative service-learning opportunities to promote positive social values in students.

In 2000, half of Banneker's graduating eighth graders were accepted to highly competitive private and public exam high schools.

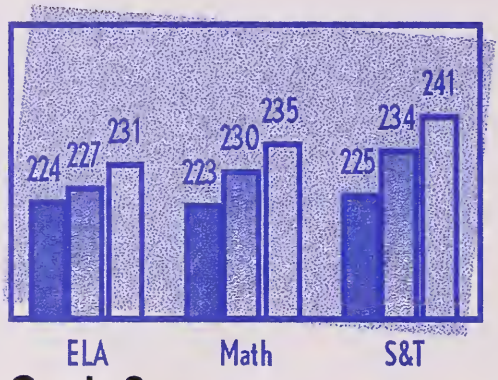
Origin. The Benjamin Banneker Charter School was started by a group of black educators and parents, community leaders and others who believe that too often minority children are not being well-served in public schools. "This school is about opportunity for the kids who have been missing it," a board member explained on its founding.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Teaching to standards
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:00
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	3,000 volumes
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Benjamin Banneker Charter School

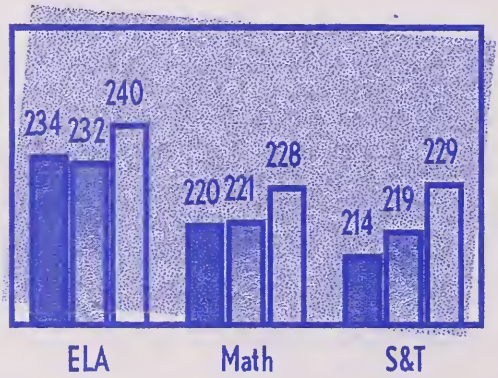
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



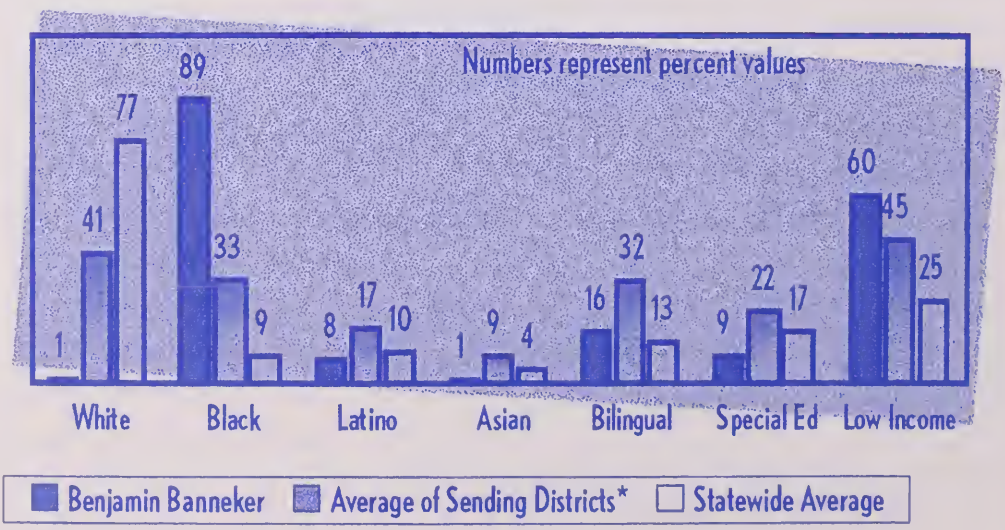
A comparison of fourth grade MCAS scores shows students being outperformed by their counterparts in the the comparable surrounding districts by three to seven points.

Grade 8



A comparison of eighth grade MCAS results shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in English/Language Arts and Math, and being outperformed in Science and Technology.

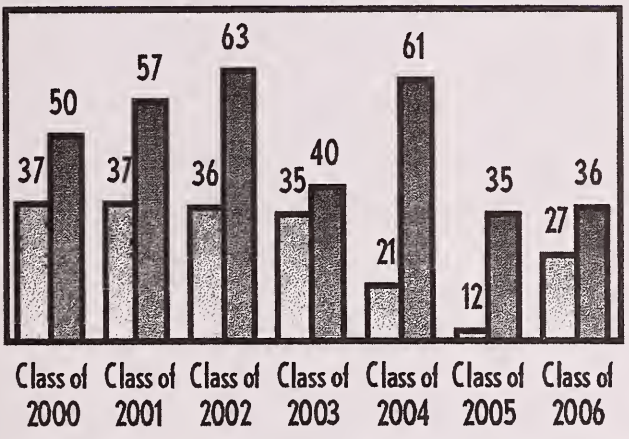
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

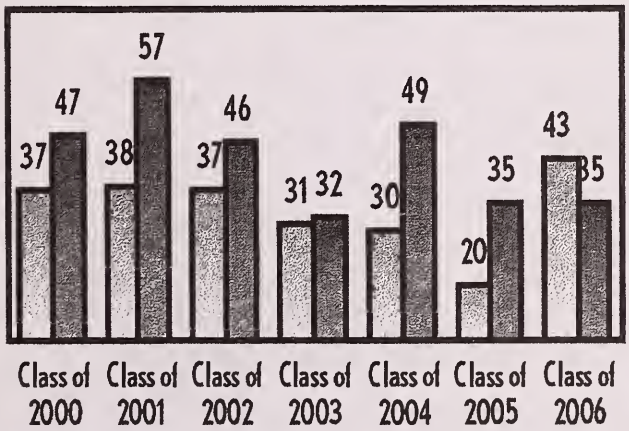
Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1998 to 2000



A comparison of individual percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in every class. Every class was below the national average in 1998, and half of classes were above the national average in 2000.

1998 Score 2000 Score

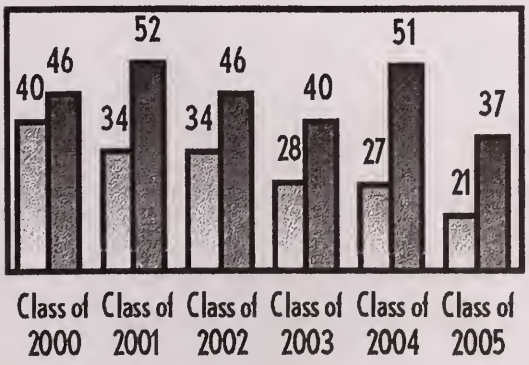
Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1998 to 2000



A comparison of individual percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in every class except 2006. The Classes of 2001, 2004, and 2005 showed much greater than expected progress.

1998 Score 2000 Score

Language, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1998 to 2000



A comparison of individual percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in every class. The Classes of 2001 and 2004 showed much greater than expected progress. Two classes were above the national average in 2000.

1998 Score 2000 Score

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Franklin
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	359
Waiting List, 1999-2000	63
Application Rate, 1999-2000	4.3
In-District Transfer Rate	0.6%

School Leader: Ruth Gass
201 Main Street, Franklin, MA 02038
Tel: 508 541 3434 Fax: 508 541 5396 E-mail: rgass@bfccs.org
http://www.bfccs.org

Mission. The mission of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School is to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children by providing the children with a classical academic education coupled with sound character education and opportunities for community service at all levels.

Description. The school's educational program is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence, which integrates a classical content-rich curriculum with contemporary technological skills. Study focuses on primary sources, with textbooks rarely used. Students are encouraged to participate in open-ended inquiry and research projects.

This is combined with a character education sequence which includes: teaching the core virtues through literature and history; performing acts of service that develop positive character traits; informing parents through special newsletter inserts; and recognizing positive behaviors at "Forest of Virtue" assemblies.

In 1999-2000, Benjamin Franklin's moral education specialist designed "SteppingStones," a new middle school character and community service education program, which has since been presented to schools in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Chicago, and South Carolina.

In 1999-2000, the middle school added a new "SteppingStones" program. All students participate in community service activities designed to build self-esteem and the ethic of giving to others. In 1999-2000, this included raking leaves in the schoolyard, delivering seasonal cards to seniors, providing peer-to-peer tutoring, collecting food for those in need, and engaging in other activities.

Benjamin Franklin also takes pride in its music curriculum, which has grown significantly each year. In 1999-2000, 160 students were signed up for music classes, with still more participating in a school marching band, wind ensemble, concert band, symphonic and jazz bands, and chorus.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	13:1
Average Experience	7.3 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,960,667
Per Pupil Expenditures	$5,461
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,664

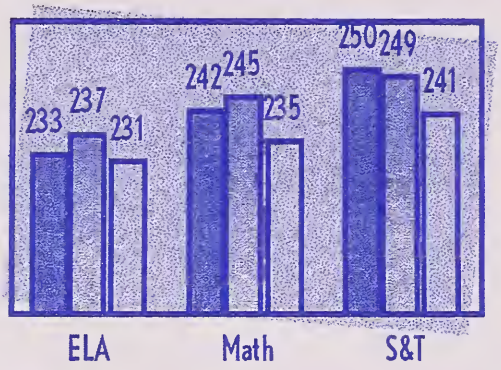
Origin. A group of parents in Franklin who met through their children's school-related activities wanted a public school that matched their common belief that character-building, self-worth, and academic depth are central to the education of children. "There are character traits that are universally respected and acclaimed, and there is basic content that all children should know," one of the school's founders explained. "That's what this school is all about."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Classical, values-based
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	182 days
Length of School Day	K-5 9:00-3:15; grades 6-8 8:00-3:15
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	3,000 volumes
Computers	15:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School

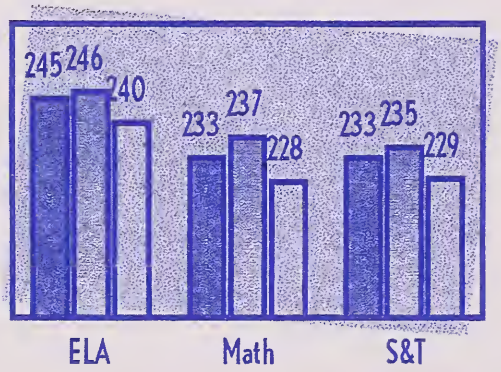
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



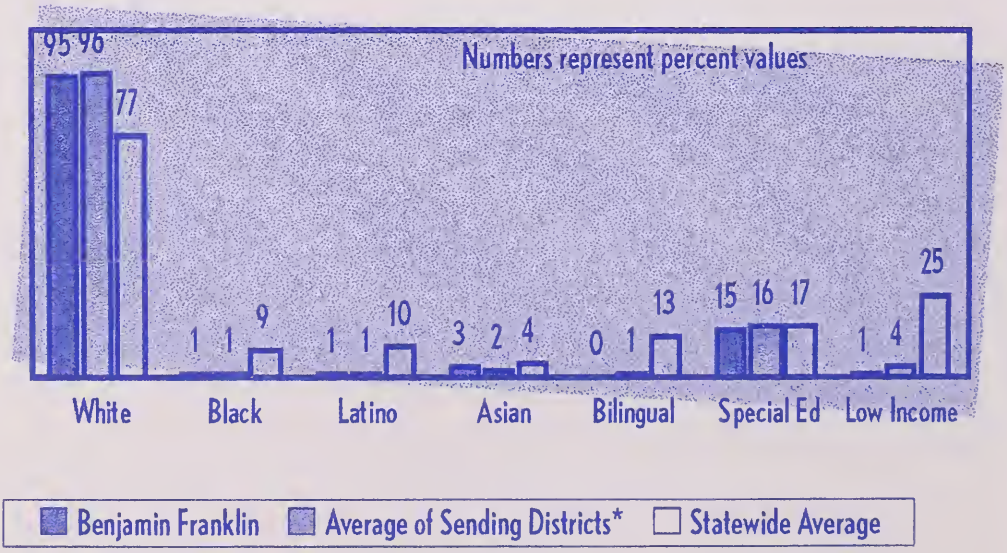
A comparison of MCAS scores shows students scoring even with their counterparts in surrounding districts in Science & Technology, and slightly below their counterparts in English/Language Arts and Math.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students scoring even with their counterparts in surrounding districts in English/Language Arts and Science & Technology, and slightly below their counterparts in Math.

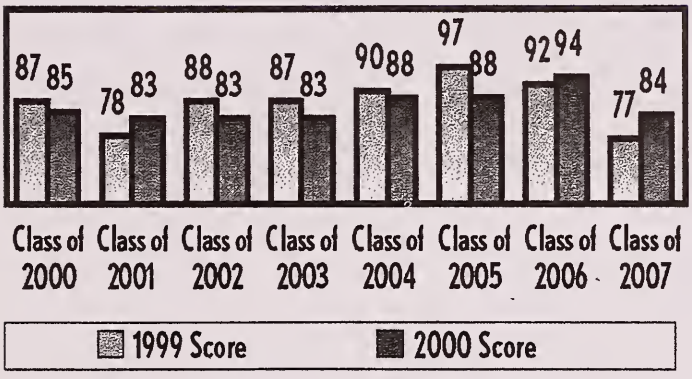
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

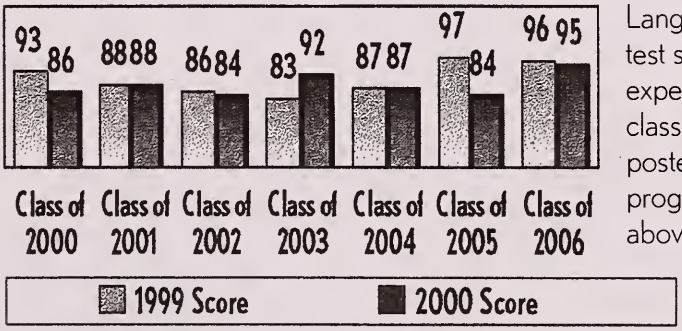
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



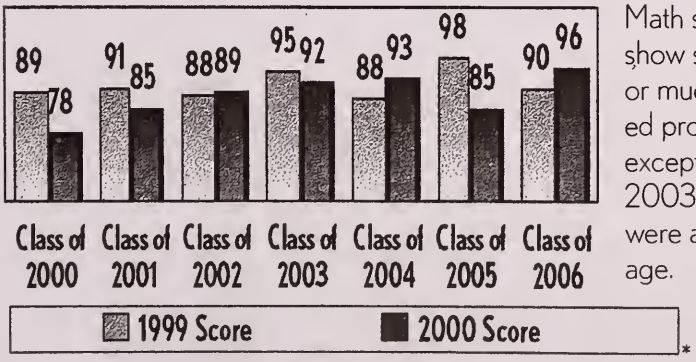
A comparison of normal curve equivalent cores on the California Achievement Test shows students making expected or greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2001, 2006, and 2007. All classes were above the national average.

Language, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



Language scores on the same test show students posting expected progress in most classes. The Class of 2003 posted greater than expected progress. All classes were above the national average.

Math, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



Math scores on the same test show students making greater or much greater than expected progress in every class except the Classes of 2000, 2003, and 2005. All classes were above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Boston Evening Academy

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	Ages 16-23
Enrollment, 1999-2000	170
Waiting List, 1999-2000	60
Application Rate, 1999-2000	2.2
In-District Transfer Rate	34.7%*

School Leader: Ferdinand Fuentes
989 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA 02215
Tel: 617 635 6789 Fax: 617 635 6380 E-mail: eveningacad.dom@boston.k12.ma.us

Mission. The Boston Evening Academy is a collective of gifted young adults, educators, parents and community members who are committed to creating an innovative and alternative learning culture where the mission is: Students first!

Description. A central tenet at Boston Evening Academy is for teachers to know who their students are, rather than who they must be or become. And the students at Boston Evening Academy are a select group: Boston Evening Academy is the first evening high school in Boston, designed specifically for older students. As the first diploma granting, evening high school in Boston, BEA enrolls 170 students between the ages of 16 and 23. The school uses a rolling admissions system, with students accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Rather than using a traditional grading system, the school assesses students upon enrollment and places them into one of two categories: Undergraduate (beginning and intermediate skill level) and Senior (advanced skill level).

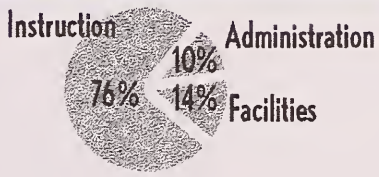
Boston Evening Academy is the first evening high school in Boston, designed specifically for older students.

* Alternative schools often serve a student population significantly more likely to transfer than that of other schools.

In order to progress from one level to the next and to graduate, students must demonstrate competencies in humanities, math, science, technology, and personal development. Classroom learning is augmented by a "classroom without walls" program, which includes an Urban Lab and community service activities that connect curricular lessons to real life experience. Seniors also participate in school-to-career planning, portfolio roundtables in which they present their work and post-graduation plans to a committee, and an end of the year student symposium.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	12:1
Average Experience	11.0 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,293,402
Per Pupil Expenditures	$9,102
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,304



Overcoming the challenges they had faced in completing high school in the past, seventeen students graduated from BEA in 2000. Of these, one enlisted in the army, three enrolled in college, and four have entered the workforce.

Origin. Boston Evening Academy was founded in 1997 as the first diploma-granting public evening high school in Boston. Its founders decided to apply for a Horace Mann charter in the school's second year of operation in order to gain the flexibility and autonomy to pursue innovative teaching practices to help its students succeed.

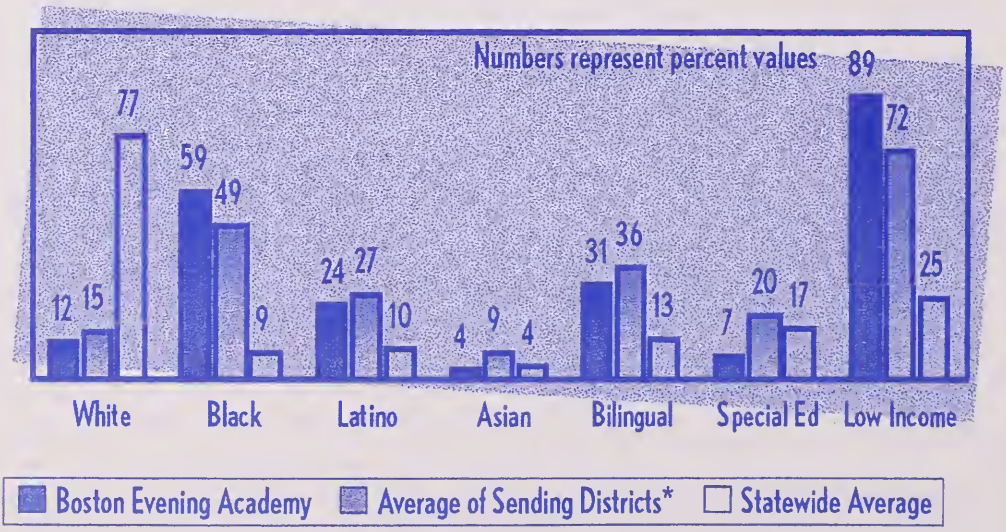
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Project-based, out-of-school youth
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving ages 16-23
Length of School Year	186 days
Length of School Day	8:00am - 3:15pm
School Meetings	Weekly all-school meetings
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	6,000 volumes
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self-managed

Boston Evening Academy

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

At the request of the Massachusetts Department of Education, Boston Evening Academy students did not take the MCAS exam in 1999-2000.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress

In 1999-2000, data for Boston Evening Academy is based on the ACCUPLACER Computerized Placement Test. Using this test, the school has assessed the average grade level of students in various subjects. Because of the nontraditional student age population and high turnover rate at Boston Evening Academy, a comparison of scores over time—which is provided for other charter schools—is not provided here.

Average Grade Level, 2000

Using the ACCUPLACER Computerized Placement Test, Boston Evening Academy determined that:

- 45 students were at an average eighth grade level in reading comprehension, sentence structure, arithmetic, and algebra.
- 120 students were at an average ninth to tenth grade level in these subjects.
- 50 students were at an average eleventh grade level in these subjects.
- 30 students were at an average twelfth grade level in these subjects.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Boston Renaissance Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	1151
Waiting List, 1999-2000	1394
Application Rate, 1999-2000	9.2
In-District Transfer Rate	8.5%

School Leaders:
Roger Harris and Dudley Blodget
250 Stuart Street, Boston, MA 02116
Tel: 617 357 0900 Fax: 617 338 2647
http://www.BostonRenaissance.com

Mission. The mission of Boston Renaissance Charter School, a public school, is to develop academic competence and to build confidence, character, and citizenship.

Description. Boston Renaissance Charter School, located in downtown Boston and open to all Boston children offers its students a challenging and comprehensive academic program in a vibrant and child-centered atmosphere. Renaissance has developed student academic standards that specify what students should know and be able to do in every area of the curriculum. The standards span five domains—humanities and the arts, mathematics and science, character and ethics, health and physical fitness, and practical arts and skills—and they communicate high expectations to teachers, students, and parents/guardians. The student standards also bring coherence to the overall school design and serve as the basis for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

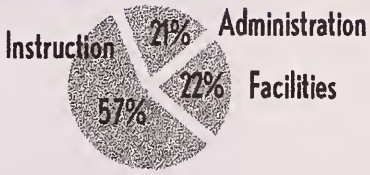
Boston Renaissance started the 1999-2000 year with the launch of three new summer programs: an MCAS Summer School, Community Service Program, and elementary school Summer Camp.

The school is organized into three academies based on student grade level: Primary Academy for grades K-2, Elementary Academy for grades 3-5, and Junior Academy for grades 6-8. The school's academic curriculum is complemented by programs in technology, foreign language, fine arts, music, dance, theater and athletics. Renaissance students are also active in a variety of business, university, cultural, and community-based partnerships around the city.

Boston Renaissance has invested heavily in purchasing and developing a state-of-the-art facility for its students. By issuing bonds, the school has been able to finance this ambitious venture and invest in a high-quality facility.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	24:1
Average Experience	3.2 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$8,688,889 *
Per Pupil Expenditure	$7,615
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,666



Origin. The founding coalition of the Renaissance School consisted of a partnership between the Massachusetts-based Horace Mann Foundation and The Edison Project, working in conjunction with dozens of interested Bostonians. "The idea was to create a catalyst, an engine, a symbol of what you could have in an urban setting," says one of the school's founders. "We want it to be something everybody can look at and utilize to find a way to create effective schools."

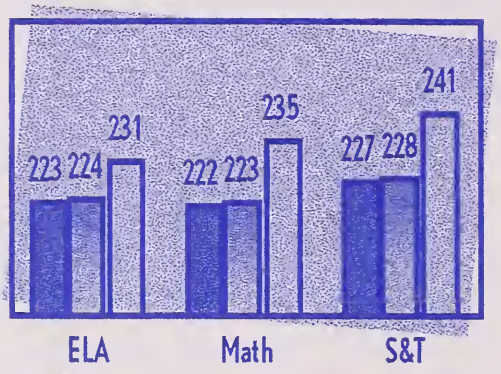
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Research-based, structured programs
Size at Full Capacity	School may expand to K-12
Length of School Year	192 days
Length of School Day	K-5: 8:30-3:30; 6-8: 7:20-4:00
School Meetings	Academy-based, periodic meetings
Student Dress Code	Dress Code
Library	5,000 volumes
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Edison Schools

* Spending does not include capital outlay and debt service for bond issue.

Boston Renaissance Charter School

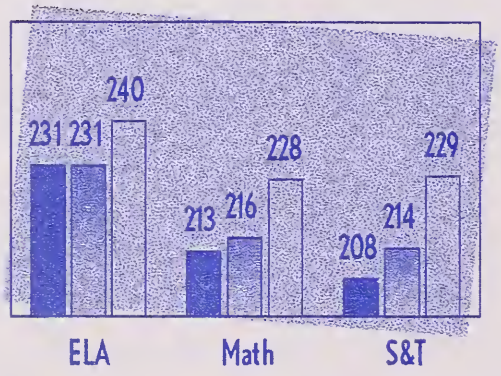
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



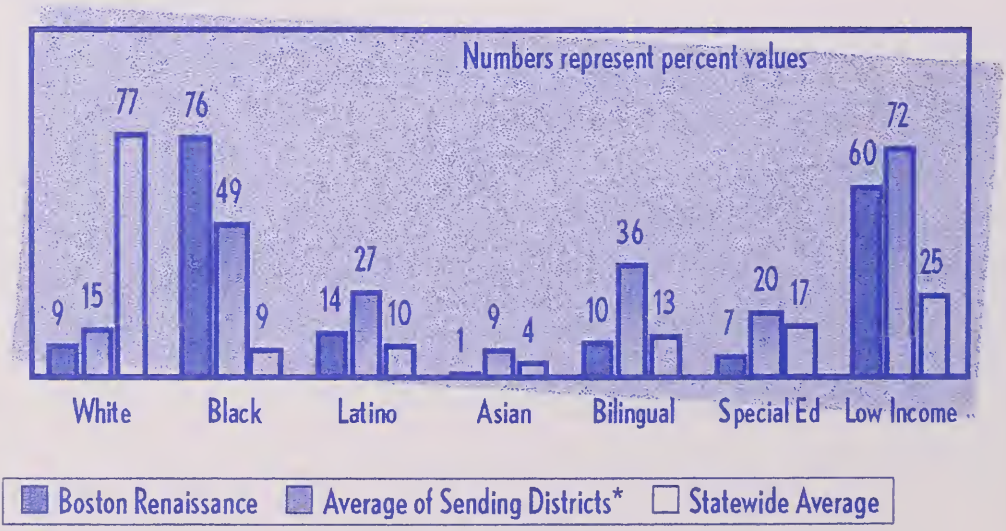
A comparison of MCAS scores shows Renaissance students with scores similar to those of their counterparts in the surrounding district in every subject area.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows Renaissance students even with their district counterparts in English/Language Arts and slightly outperformed in Math and Science & Technology.

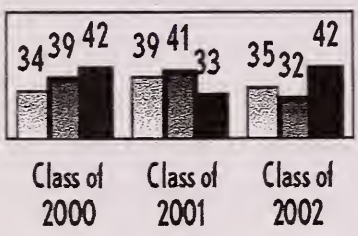
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

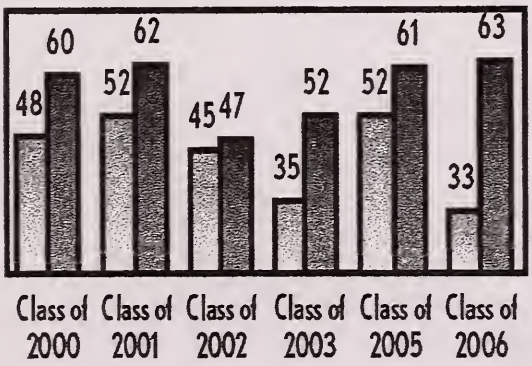
Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



A longitudinal cohort analysis of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making relatively strong progress in the Classes of 2000 and 2002, but making less than expected progress in the Class of 2001.

1998 Score 1999 Score 2000 Score

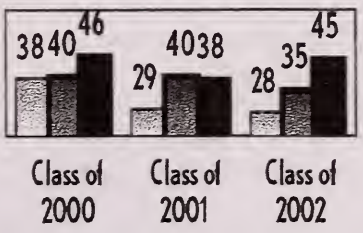
Reading, Internal Scores, November to April, 2000



A comparison of student scores on an internal test administered at Boston Renaissance shows progress in every class over the six-month period reported.

November Score April Score

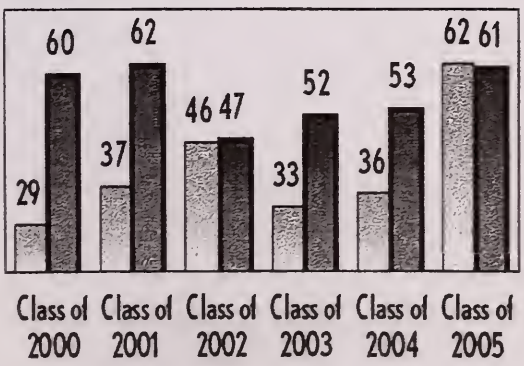
Math, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



A longitudinal cohort analysis of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making relatively strong progress in each class, particularly the Class of 2002, which showed much greater than expected progress both years.

1998 Score 1999 Score 2000 Score

Math, Internal Scores, November to April, 2000



A comparison of student scores on an internal test administered at Boston Renaissance shows strong progress in every class with the exception of the Classes of 2002 and 2005.

November Score April Score

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Orleans
Grades Served, 1999-2000	6-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	171
Waiting List, 1999-2000	128
Application Rate, 1999-2000	2.8
In-District Transfer Rate	0.0%

School Leader: Patricia Anthony
225 Route 6A Box 1959, Orleans, MA 02653
Tel: 508 240 2800 Fax: 508 240 3583 E-mail: pat_anthony@lighthouse.chtr.k12.ma.us
http://www.lighthouse.chtr.k12.ma.us

Mission. The mission of the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School is to foster intellectual development and academic achievement by providing a school centered around challenging interactive learning experiences that consistently bridge traditional disciplines.

Description. Cape Cod Lighthouse employs an interdisciplinary approach that utilizes the unique natural resources on Cape Cod and is developed and implemented with local resource partners. The school's approach is intended to break down the boundary between school and community, and practical and theoretical, while strategically integrating technology into all aspects of the curriculum. As students study thematic units focused in large part upon these local resources, they are expected to recognize that real life cuts across disciplines and can be enhanced through education.

Cape Cod Lighthouse doesn't just claim to prepare students for high school, it proves it. In a survey of alumni, 91 percent felt they had been well prepared for high school and 91 percent of the courses they took were at the college preparatory level.

Students work on a variety of projects that take them outside the classroom to the Cape Cod community. Sixth graders set out on visits to local ponds, marshes, and beaches one afternoon a month to complete an inter-

disciplinary project based on the Cape Cod habitat. All eighth graders participate in their local Town Meeting as a lesson in civics. Through the seminar program in which teacher, parents, and community members teach ninety minute classes twice a week, students have built telescopes, tested local waters, and attended a school in Japan.

The school's strong sense of community is further enhanced through a variety of group activities. Students participate in an all-school overnight camping experience, a ropes course, and seventh and eighth grade class trips. They discuss behavior problems at class meetings, and participate in physical education and extracurricular activities, ranging from sports teams, to biking, scuba diving, and drama club.

The school also focuses on preparing students for high school, and follows up with alumni to assess their level of preparation. In a survey of alumni last year, the school found that 91 percent felt they had been well prepared for high school and 91 percent of the courses they took were at the college preparatory level.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	9.5:1
Average Experience	11 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,569,540
Per Pupil Expenditures	$9,179
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,140

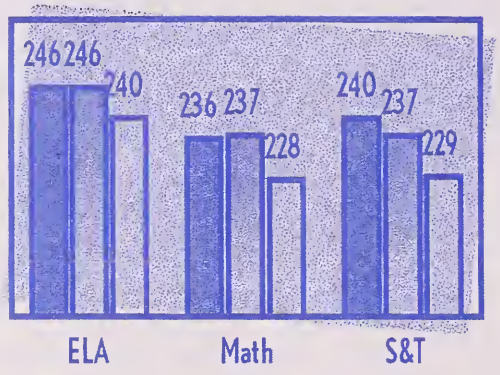
Origin. The school, inspired by Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, was founded by a grassroots coalition of parents and community organizations. As a founding board member put it, "We wanted to create a school that demands much of students, that takes advantage of community resources, and where there isn't an artificial boundary between the practical and theoretical."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Interdisciplinary, project-based learning
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 6-8
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:55-3:15
School Meetings	2-3 times a year
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	1,500 volumes
Computers	4:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

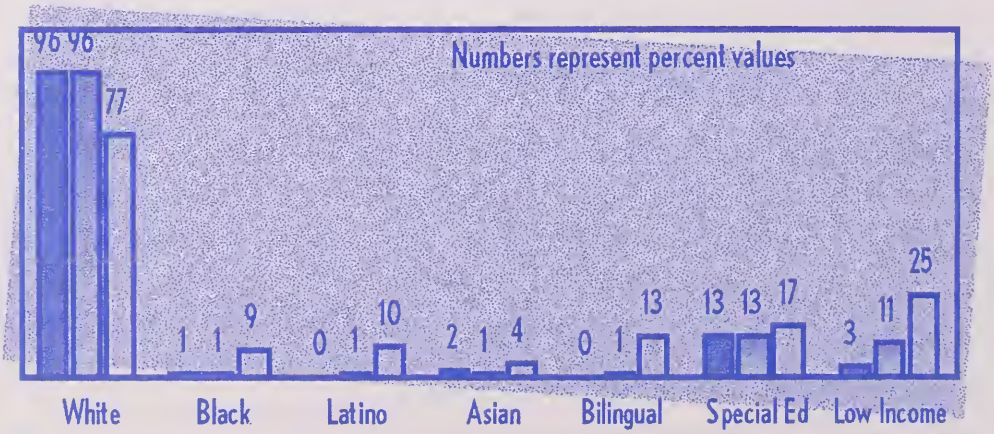
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those in their surrounding districts in English/Language Arts and Math, and slightly better than their district counterparts in Science & Technology.

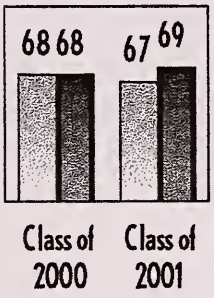
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

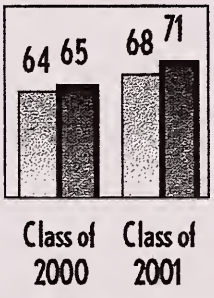
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Overall, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000

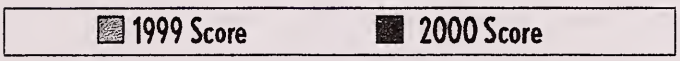


A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test show students making greater than expected progress in the Class of 2001 and less than expected in the Class of 2000. Both classes were above the national average.

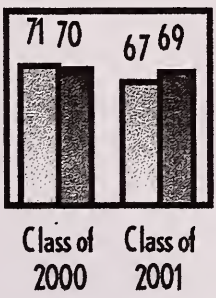
Language, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent cores on the California Achievement Test shows students making greater than expected progress in both classes. Both classes were above the national average.

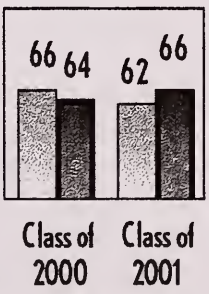


Reading, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test show students making greater than expected progress in the Class of 2001 and less than expected in the Class of 2000. Both classes were above the national average.

Math, CAT NCE Scores, 1999 to 2000



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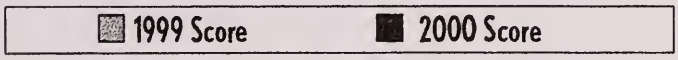


* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Champion Charter School of Brockton

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1999
Location	Brockton
Grades Served, 1999-2000	Ages 16-21
Enrollment, 1999-2000	126
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.2
In-District Transfer Rate	49.2%*

School Leader: Curtis Wells
1 Centre Street, Brockton, MA 02301
Tel: 508 894 4377 Fax: 508 894 4380 E-mail: cwells@championcharter.org

Mission. The mission of the Champion Charter School of Brockton is to provide high quality, academically challenging education for out-of-school youth by creating a dynamic learning laboratory that uses a school-to-career pedagogy as its framework; an environment that embraces the vision of the Brockton Public Schools and involves a broad range of community based organizations; and an innovative and flexible model to serve an underserved population in our community. It will provide integrated learning experiences that continually demonstrate how what is learned in the classroom relates to the workplace, the students' personal growth, their role in the community, and their future.

In 1999-2000, students at Champion took third place in the New England High School Video Competition for a video they wrote, directed, and produced exploring the reasons youth drop out of school.

Description. The Champion Charter School was designed to meet the needs of high school dropouts in Brockton by weaving together various innovative programs from the school system and the community. Its curriculum, based on the Diploma Plus Program of the Commonwealth Corporation, is designed to re-

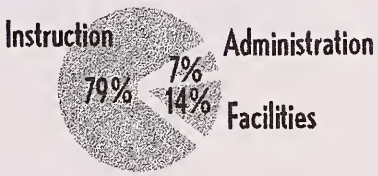
* Alternative schools often serve a student population significantly more likely to transfer than that of other schools.

engage these students in ways that will keep them in school and help them to be successful.

Champion is an ungraded high school that operates on three levels: Getting Ready, Part One, and the Plus Phase. In Getting Ready and Part One, students advance by demonstrating competency of their knowledge and skills through presentation portfolios. In the Plus Phase, students participate in at least 100 hours of internships or community service placements, engage in a Community Action Project to improve their community, and enroll in at least two courses at Massasoit Community College. Students are encouraged to pursue creative projects: last year, they took third place in the New England High School Video Competition for a video they wrote, directed, and produced exploring the reasons youth drop out of school.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	18:1
Average Experience	8 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$784,200
Per Pupil Expenditure	$6,224
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$4,631



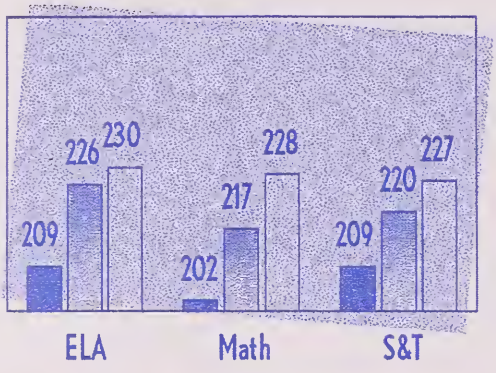
Origin. In 1996, the Alternative Education Alliance, a group of programs serving out-of-school youth in Brockton, began using Diploma Plus, a competency-based school-to-career program. One year later, when legislation was passed enabling the formation of Horace Mann charter schools, the group decided to instead turn Diploma Plus into the founding philosophy for a new school. "We felt that there were several advantages to being a charter school," explains school founder Anne Stom. "One of the realities of most alternative education programs is that when the money gets tight, they are the first ones cut. As a charter school, we would have a sustainable revenue stream."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Life skills for out-of-school youth
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 9-12
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:30-3:30
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	300 volumes
Computers	10:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Champion Charter School of Brockton

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

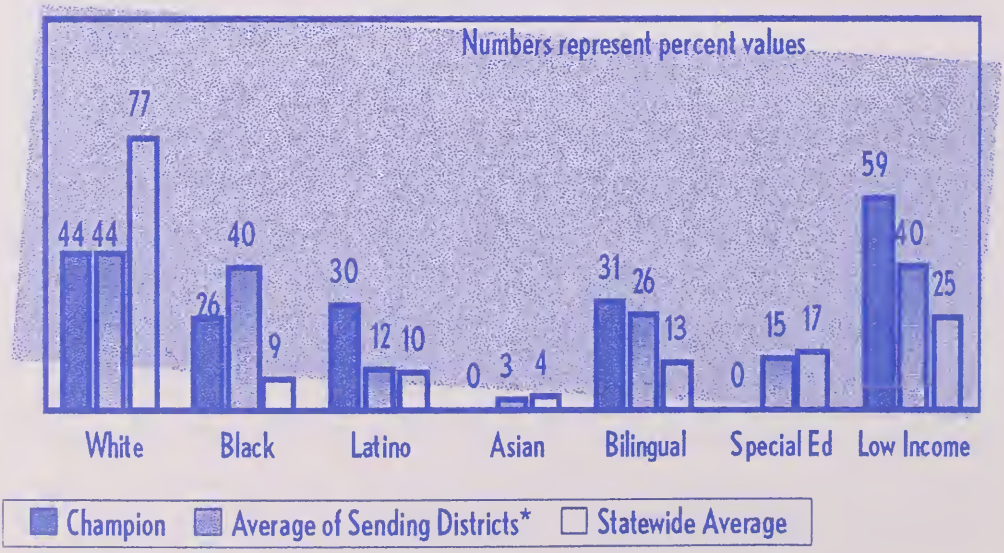
Grade 10



The graph at left compares MCAS scores for Champion students with those of other students in the surrounding district and the state as a whole. In comparing MCAS scores, it is important to note that the group of students at Champion are previously out-of-school youth and, as such, are not reflective of the overall population of in-school youth who take the MCAS exam.

Champion | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

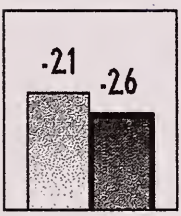


Champion | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

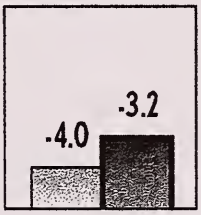
Academic Progress (Schoolwide TABE Scores)

Reading, Years Above Grade Level, 1999 to 2000



The accompanying graphs show student grade level equivalent scores with respect to the norm on the Test of Adult Basic Education. On reading, students started an average of 2.1 years below grade level in 1999, and ended an average of 2.6 years below grade level in 2000.

Language, Years Above Grade, 1999 to 2000

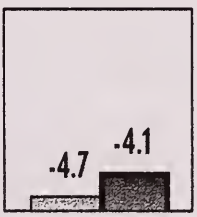


On language, students show greater than expected progress, starting 4.0 years below grade level in 1999 and ending 3.2 years below grade level in 2000.

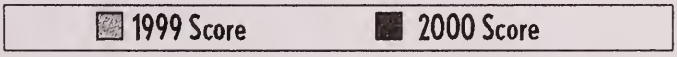
Math, Years Above Grade Level, 1999 to 2000

On math, students show expected progress, starting 4.7 years below grade level in 1999 and ending 4.7 years below grade level in 2000.

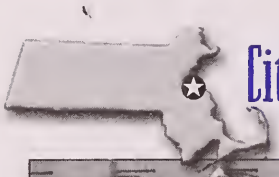
Applied Math, Years Above Grade, 1999 to 2000



On applied math, students show greater than expected progress, starting 4.7 years below grade level in 1999 and ending 4.1 years below grade level in 2000.



* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.



City on a Hill Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	9-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	192
Waiting List, 1999-2000	361
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.6
In-District Transfer Rate	7.8%

School Leader: Paul Hays
320 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115
Tel: 617 262 9838 Fax: 617 262 9064 E-mail: firstname_lastname@cityonahill.org
http://www.cityonahill.org

Mission. City on a Hill Public Charter School, a public high school in urban Boston, emphasizes academic achievement, citizenship, teacher leadership, and public accountability. We seek to graduate responsible, resourceful, and respectful democratic citizens prepared to advance community, culture and commerce, and to compete in the 21st century.

Description. City on a Hill aims to provide a rigorous program of high expectations for all students. Students are expected to earn their diplomas by demonstrating skills in ten areas: writing, reading, public speaking, analyzing historical documents, applying mathematical concepts, performing a science project, conversing in Spanish, using technology, completing and defending an independent City Project, and swimming. Students who are considerably far behind on entering the school are enrolled in an Intensive Language Arts and Mathematics Program (ILM).

City on a Hill's Teachers' Institute provides new teachers with training and veteran teachers with support for teaching in urban schools.

Central to City on a Hill's approach to education are the concepts of citizenship and community involvement. Students perform service internships in the community and engage in weekly town meetings where they debate

issues of school and public policy. The school maintains relationships with more than one hundred community organizations, and provides training and support for Boston teachers through its Teachers' Institute. Finally, at the end of every year, the school brings together panels of community members to judge students' work in order for them to graduate.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	7:1
Average Experience	6.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,159,887
Per Pupil Expenditures	$11,249
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,747

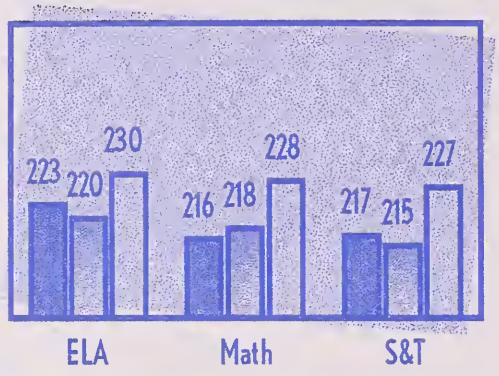
Origin. Ann Connolly Tolkoff and Sarah Kass, the school's founders, were teachers at Chelsea High School. Frustrated by low academic standards and the system in which they were being asked to teach, the two began to talk about creating a different kind of school. "I passionately believe in the power of education to change things," said Ann, a longtime public school teacher who had reservations about the charter school initiative. "I had to give a lot of thought to this, and Sarah would say, 'This is the hope for public education.'"

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Performance-based, community-oriented
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 9-12
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:25
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	E-library; 48 CD-ROM tower
Computers	5:1 Student:Computer Ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

City on a Hill Charter School

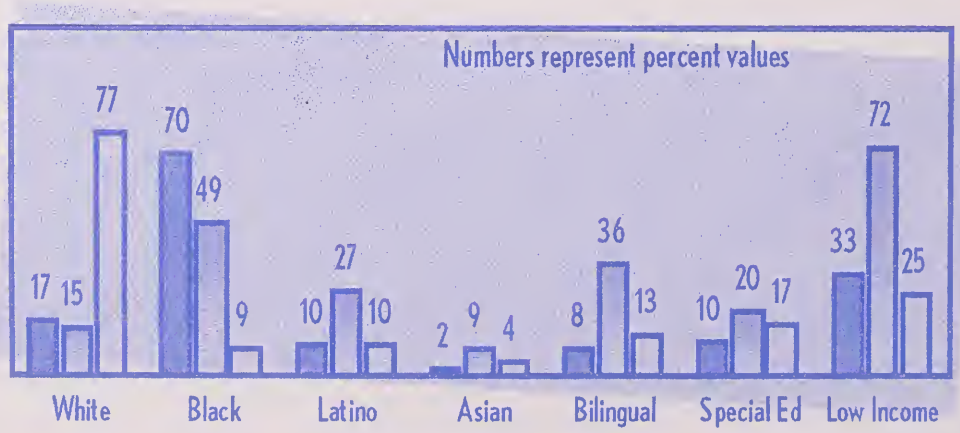
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores slightly better than their district school counterparts in English/Language Arts, and similar to those in their surrounding districts in Math and Science & Technology.

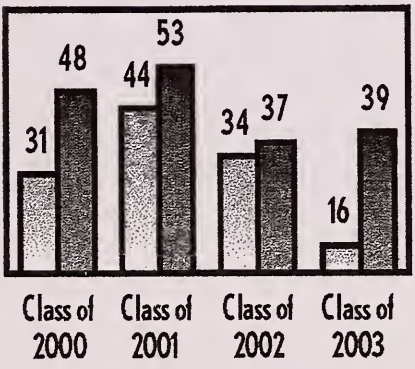
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

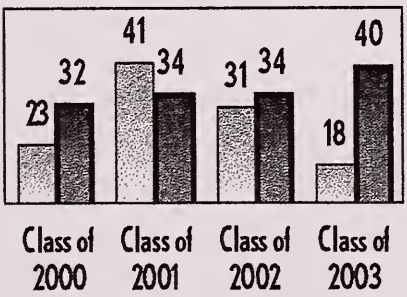
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Percent at or above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



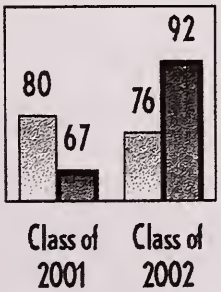
A comparison of the percentage of students at or above grade level according to Stanford-9 scores shows every class making progress, with particularly strong progress in the Class of 2003.

Math, Percent at or above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



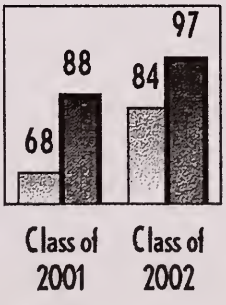
A comparison of the percentage of students at or above grade level according to Stanford-9 scores shows students making progress in every class except the Class of 2001. As with reading, the entering Class of 2003 shows particularly strong progress.

Science, Percent Passing Internal Measure, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of the percentage of students passing the school's science project standards in 1999 and 2000 shows strong progress in the Class of 2002, but not in the Class of 2001.

History, Internal Measure, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of the percentage of students passing the school's history content standards in 1999 and 2000 shows strong progress in both classes.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Community Day Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Lawrence
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	240
Waiting List, 1999-2000	495
Application Rate, 1999-2000	31.9
In-District Transfer Rate	0.8%

School Leader: Sheila Balboni
190 Hampshire Street, Lawrence, MA 01840
Tel: 978 681 9910 Fax: 978 682 1013 E-mail: sbalboni@communitydaycare.org
http://www.cdcs.chtr.k12.ma.us

Mission. The mission of Community Day Charter School is to provide a kindergarten through grade eight school that will draw upon our considerable experience in working together as a community to develop and implement a curriculum that discovers and supports the special characteristics and unique learning styles of each student. We will engage that student in meaningful learning experiences for the purposes of clearly stated goals in the areas of understanding, knowledge, skills, habits, and social competencies. The curriculum will be embedded in the reality of city life and will reinforce the positive aspects of our city: its culture, art and economy, its working class history, and strong work ethic.

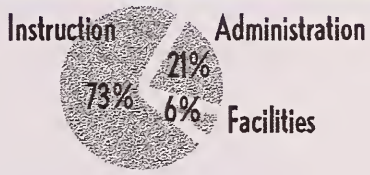
In 1999-2000, Community Day launched a capital campaign to renovate the city's historic Old Library Building (c. 1892), which will house a Charter School Early Education Center, a Family Resource Center, and a Teacher Training Center.

Description. The curriculum at Community Day focuses on meeting the individual needs of every child through a model of inclusion of all students in the same educational process. Every year, each student at Community Day develops a Personal Education Goal. Each student's PEG includes curricular goals as well as appropriate plans for tutoring,

pull-out instruction, small group instruction, work with specialists, and any other activities appropriate to that student's needs. As a result of this philosophy, no students are singled out as "special needs" students, giving the school a unique and highly inclusive environment. The school takes the same approach with English-as-a-second-language learners, providing English language immersion for all students as a central part of its curriculum.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	9.8:1
Average Experience	5.4 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,261,686
Per Pupil Expenditures	$9,424
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,646



Students engage in a variety of community-building activities, serving as mentors and tutors to their younger peers, presenting information being learned through student performances and participation in town meetings. In 1999-2000, Community Day launched a capital campaign to renovate the historic Old Library Building in Lawrence, which will house a Charter School Early Education Center, a Family Resource Center, and Teacher Training Center.

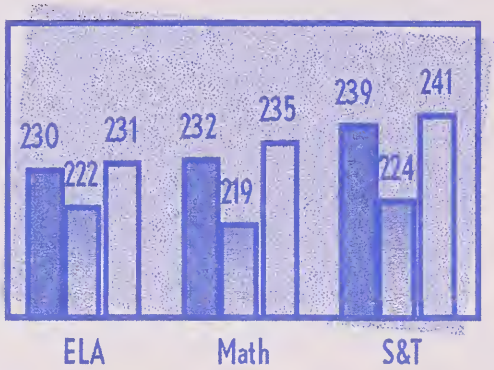
Origin. Community Day Charter School was created by a citywide coalition led by Sheila Balboni, who serves as executive director of Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc., a community-based organization dedicated to providing child care, education, and support for working families. "We were prodded by families," Sheila explained, "to create a public elementary school that incorporated the features of our existing programs—parent input, bilingual staff, relevant curriculum, and a welcoming and warm environment."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Individualized instruction
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	185 days
Length of School Day	8:00-4:00
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	7,000 volumes
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Community Day Care of Lawrence, Inc.

Community Day Charter School

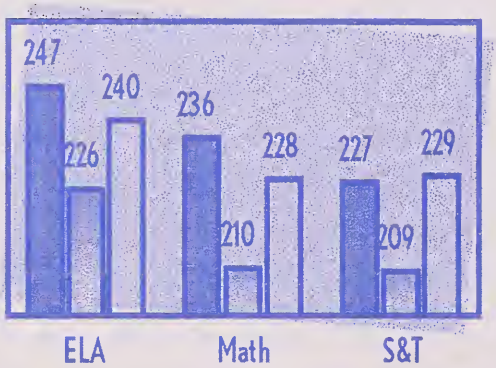
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



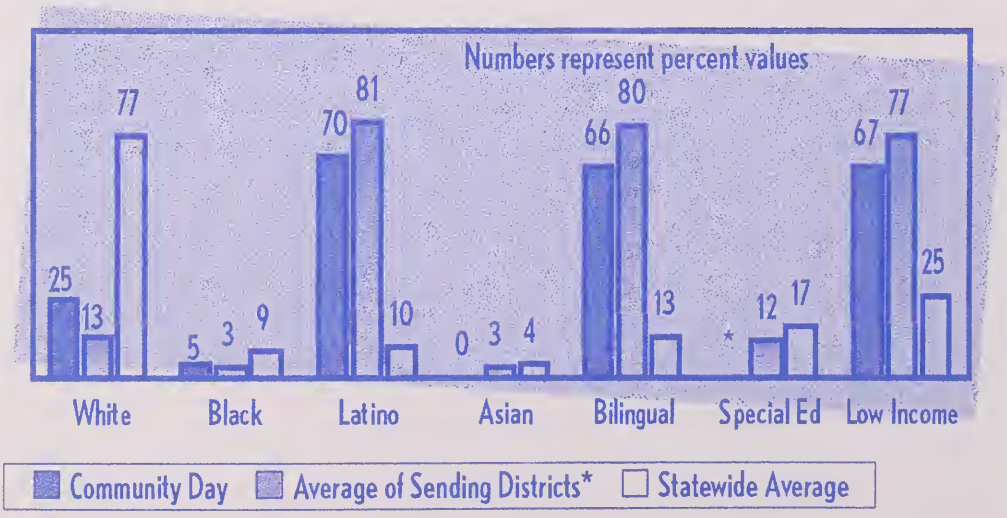
A comparison of MCAS scores shows fourth grade students with scores eight to fifteen points better than their district school counterparts.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows eighth grade students with scores eighteen to 26 points better than their district school counterparts.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

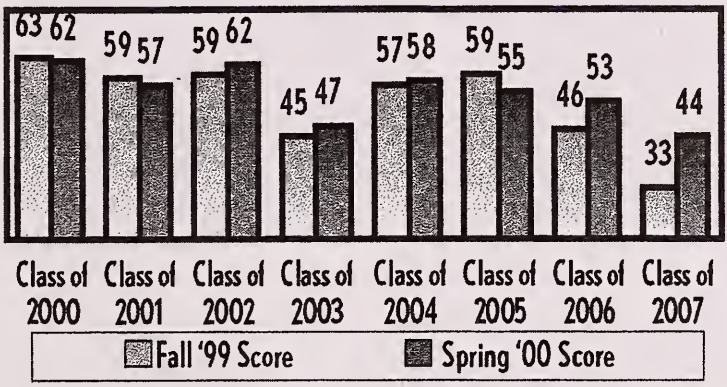


* Because of Community Day's unique program, no students are counted as "special education" (see description on previous page).

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

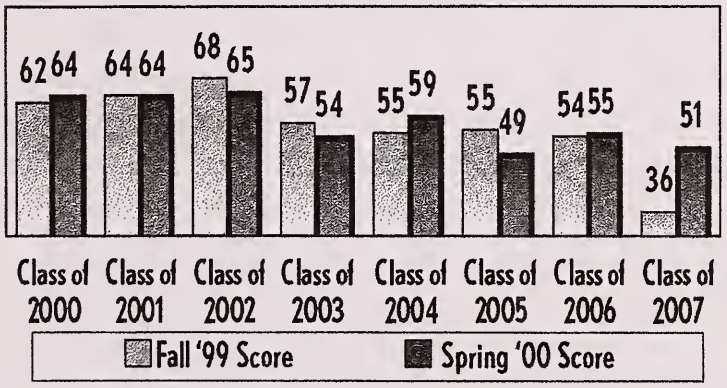
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Terra Nova NCE Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



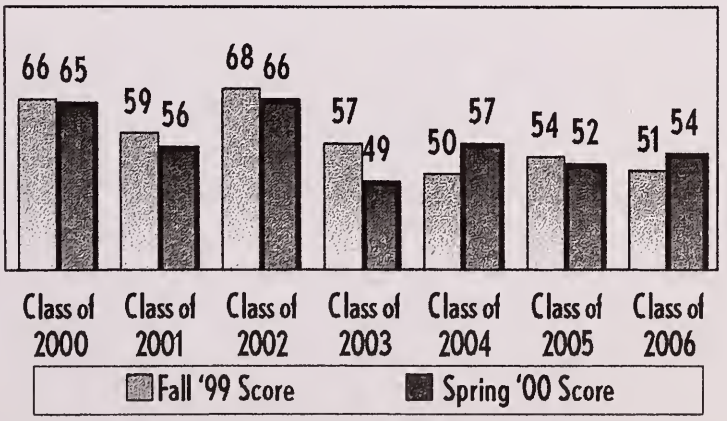
A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Terra Nova shows every class except 2005 making expected or greater than expected progress. All but two classes were above the national average.

Math, Terra Nova NCE Scores,Fall '99 to Spring '00



Math scores on the Terra Nova show the Classes of 2000, 2004, and 2007 making greater than expected progress. All but one class ended the year above the national average.

Social Studies, Terra Nova NCE Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



Social studies scores on the Terra Nova show the Classes of 2004 and 2006 making greater than expected progress. All but one class ended the year above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Conservatory Lab Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1999
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-2
Enrollment, 1999-2000	60
Waiting List, 1999-2000	110
Application Rate, 1999-2000	2.8
In-District Transfer Rate	5.0%

School Leader: Mary Street
50 West Broadway, South Boston, MA 02127
Tel: 617 269 2408 Fax: 617 269 2782 E-mail: CLCS1@aol.com

Mission. The mission of the Conservatory Lab Charter School is to successfully enable children to achieve high levels of academic success through an educational model that incorporates music across the curriculum as a powerful resource for learning. The CLCS is also commited, through its relationship with the New England Conservatory of Music and its Research Center for Learning Through Music, to building a strong, replicable model that fulfills the underlying purpose of charter schools, that is, to effect change and improvement in public school education.

Description. Building on research and strong evidence that music is an exceptional entry point for all kinds of learning—reading, numbers, analysis, memorization, and cross-subject integration—Conservatory Lab Charter School employs this powerful tool for both the intellectual and social development of all its students. The curriculum focuses on student's ability to listen, question, create, perform, and reflect through music. In addition to instruction in core

Though only two years old, Conservatory Lab's innovative Learning Through Music curriculum has already been shared with two public school systems in other cities in Massachusetts.

subject areas, every child learns how to play a musical instrument, receives sixty minutes of musical instruction every day, and participates in weekly Learning Through Music assemblies.

Viewing itself as a pioneer in the field, Conservatory lab has partnered with the New England Conservatory as well as faculty from Harvard University, Brown University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Through its innovative curriculum and related research, the school hopes to explore the merits of a music-based curriculum and present lessons for other public schools. Some of these lessons have already been used by the school systems in the cities of Nahant and Lynn, Massachusetts.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	6:1
Average Experience	5.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$803,982
Per Pupil Expenditure	$13,400
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,492

Origin. The Conservatory Lab Charter School was founded by four educator/researchers—Larry Scripp, Lyle Davidson, Mary Street, and Rhoda Bernard—who are working with the New England Conservatory Music to develop the school's Learning Through Music curriculum based on research showing the correlations between music and learning. The school's founders explain, "We believe that music is a powerful tool for use across the elementary curriculum to enable children to reach high academic standards."

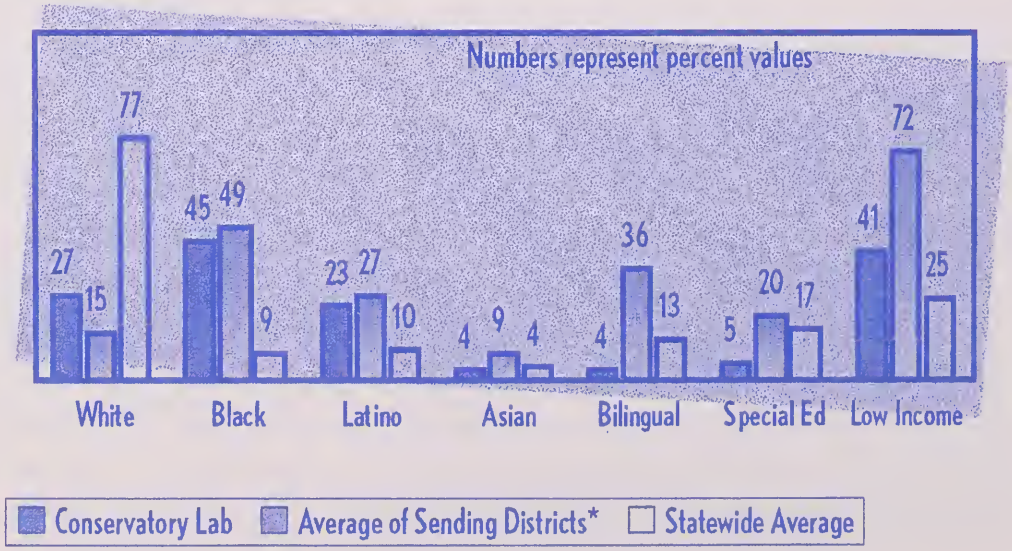
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Learning though music
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:30-3:00
School Meetings	Weekly
After-School Program	3:00-4:45
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Yes
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management	Self managed

Conservatory Lab Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Because Conservatory Lab Charter School does not currently enroll any fourth, eighth, or tenth graders, it has no students who took the MCAS exam in 1999-2000.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress

Longitudinal data on academic progress is currently not available.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Francis W. Parker Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Devens (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	7-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	346
Waiting List, 1999-2000	168
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.2
In-District Transfer Rate	4.3%

School Leader: Gregory Sinner
P.O. Box 2129, Devens, MA 01432
Tel: 978 772 3293 Fax: 978 772 3295 E-mail: parkerschool@parker.org
http://www.parker.org

Mission. The mission of the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School is to move the child to the center of the education process, and to interrelate the several subjects of the curriculum in such a way as to enhance their meaning for the child.

Description. The Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School philosophy emphasizes student-centered, inquiry-based learning, close student-teacher relationships, and the mastery of basic intellectual skills by all students. Students learn in blocks according to two academic Domains: Mathematics, Science, and Technology (MST) and Arts and Humanities (AH). Instruction is also provided in Spanish and Wellness.

Parker's Regional Teachers Center, which offers sessions on the Essential Schools philosophy, hosted nearly 150 visiting educators in 1999-2000.

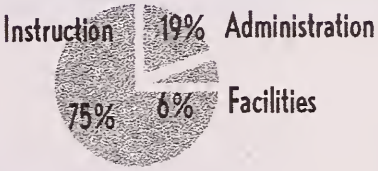
Students do not advance by grade levels, and the school does not typically identify students that way. Instead, students advance toward graduation at their own pace through three "Divisions" by demonstrating they can regularly meet the standard for Division-specific criteria. Students assemble portfolios and present an exhibition of their work in order to "gateway" to

the next level. Students can graduate once they demonstrate that they are regularly meeting the standards for Division 3 and once they have completed a capstone Senior Project, a topic or project they choose to explore independently and which is judged by a panel of community members from the school and larger community.

The school includes a strong emphasis on close community ties, with an advisory system that allows teachers to know students well, a mentoring system through which senior staff coach junior staff; and a community service component in the curriculum through which all students contribute to the school and the larger community.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	9:1
Average Experience	6.2 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,322,191
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,712
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,325



Parker is designed to be a laboratory exemplifying the Coalition of Essential Schools philosophy. The school's Regional Teachers Center offers workshops and seminars to educators from schools across the region and around the country. The Center hosted nearly 150 visitors in the 1999-2000 school year.

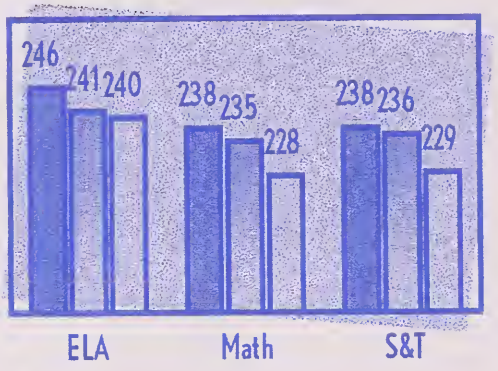
Origin. Francis W. Parker was founded by a group of parents, academics, and former school committee members living in the Harvard area, including John Stadler, a venture capitalist, Laura Rogers, an educational psychologist, Kathleen Cushman, a journalist, and Ted Sizer, author and former director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. "What this school is," Sizer said on its founding, "is an expression of the purely American belief in democracy, belief in the freedom of the mind."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Essential School, inquiry-based learning
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 7-12
Length of School Year	185 days
Length of School Day	MTThF 8:30-3:30, W 8:30-1:30
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	20,000 volumes
Computers	10:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Francis W. Parker Charter School

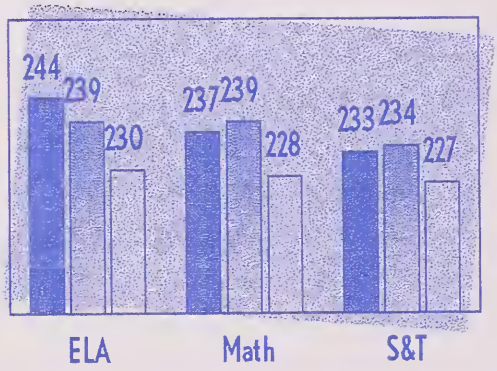
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



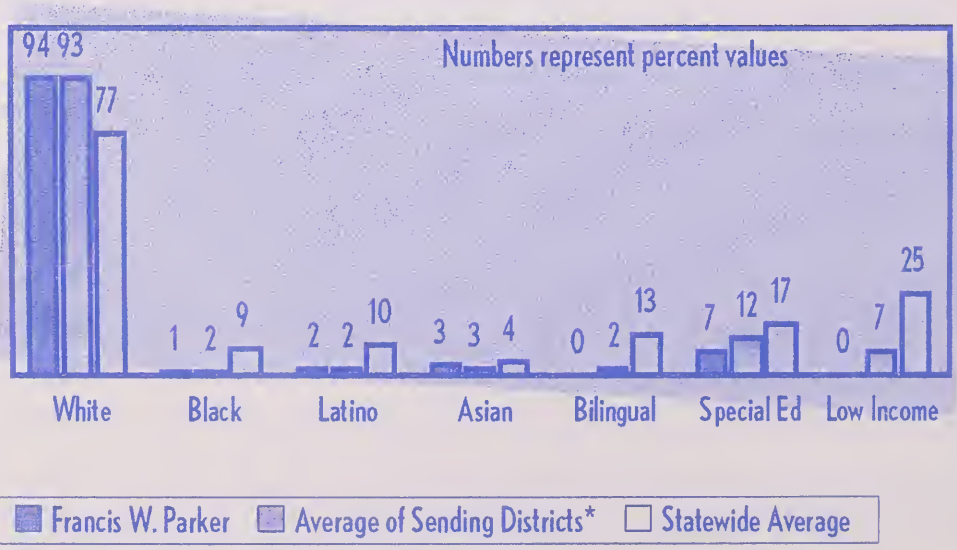
A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in Math and Science & Technology and slightly higher than their district counterparts in English/Language Arts.

Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in Math and Science & Technology and slightly higher than their district counterparts in English/Language Arts.

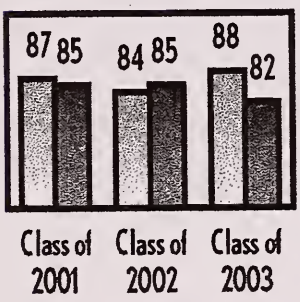
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

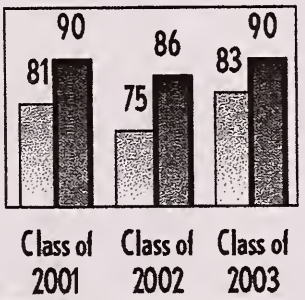
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1996 to 1998



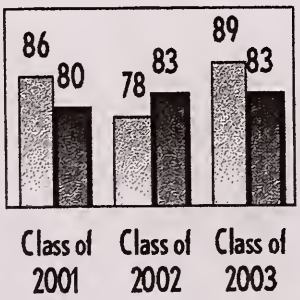
A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows expected progress by the Class of 2002, and slightly less than expected by the Classes of 2001 and 2003. All classes were above the national average.

Math, Stanford-9 NCE, 1996 to 1998



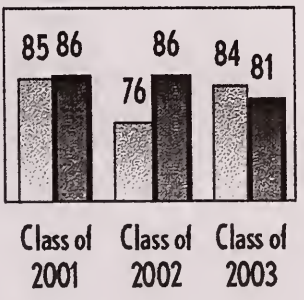
A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows much greater than expected progress in every class. All classes were above the national average as well.

Science, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1996 to 1998



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows much greater than expected progress by the Class of 2002, and less than expected progress by the Classes of 2001 and 2003. All classes were above the national average.

Social Science Scores, 1996 to 1998



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows much greater than expected progress by the Class of 2002 and expected growth for the Class of 2001. All classes were above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Health Careers Academy

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	9-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	170
Waiting List, 1999-2000	43
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.8
In-District Transfer Rate	4.7%

School Leader: Peggy Pickering
502 Hayden Hall, Boston, MA 02115
Tel: 617 373 8576 Fax: 617 373 7850 E-mail: healthcareers@boston.k12.ma.us
http://www.boston.k12.ma.us/schools/rc648.asp

Mission. The mission of the Health Careers Academy is to prepare urban youth for success in college and careers in the health sciences, and to ensure a future health care workforce that reflects the racial and cultural demographics of the city. The school links a traditional academic program with practice-oriented internships in community-based partner sites.

Description. The Health Careers Academy is a college preparatory high school for Boston students who aspire to careers in the health professions. The school focuses on health and science to excite student interest and establish relevance in education, to promote a career focus, and to address the health care needs of underserved communities. All students must take courses in health education, health careers, and health ethics, in addition to standard high school English, history, science, and math. In 1999-2000, the school expanded its curriculum to include visual and performing arts and physical education.

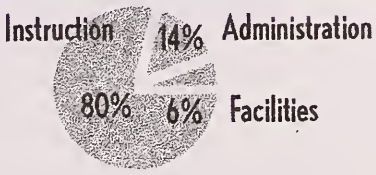
In 1999-2000, students at Health Careers organized an international travel experience to Mexico—for many students their first opportunity for travel outside the United States.

Based at Northeastern University, the school and its students have access to science laboratories, physical education facilities, visual arts studio

space, and library resources at the college. In addition, Health Careers Academy seeks to provide special opportunities and assistance for students at both ends of the academic spectrum. Students who excel are able to enroll in college credit courses through a dual enrollment program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Students who are struggling receive support through such programs as *Boys Town Reading is FAME*, remedial reading classes which boosted students' reading levels an average of three grade levels in the 1999-2000 school year.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	10:1
Average Experience	10.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,723,794
Per Pupil Expenditure	$10,140
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,197



The school offers a variety of after-school activities including a mock trial team, film club, poetry club, and intramural baseball team. In 1999-2000, students organized an international travel experience to Mexico—giving many students their first opportunity for travel outside the United States. All but two of the school's graduating seniors applied to and were accepted by colleges of their choice in 2000.

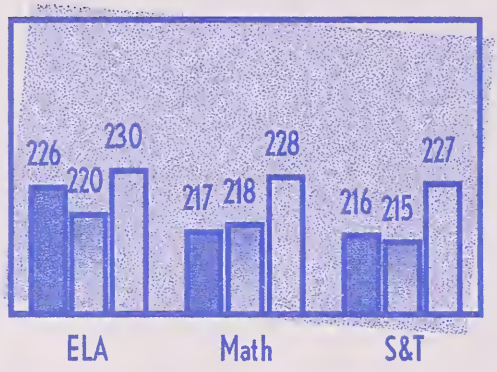
Origin. The Health Careers Academy was established as a partnership between the Boston Public Schools, Northeastern University Bouve College of Health Sciences, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston Medical Center, the Boston Public Health Commission, and 14 community health centers. The Academy was founded in response to the fact that despite the prestigious medical care and research centers that thrive in Boston, few of Boston's children find educational or career pathways in these areas.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Health education as college prep
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 9-12
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	7:30-2:30 MTThF; 7:30-11:50 W
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Northeastern University library
Computers	6:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Health Careers Academy

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

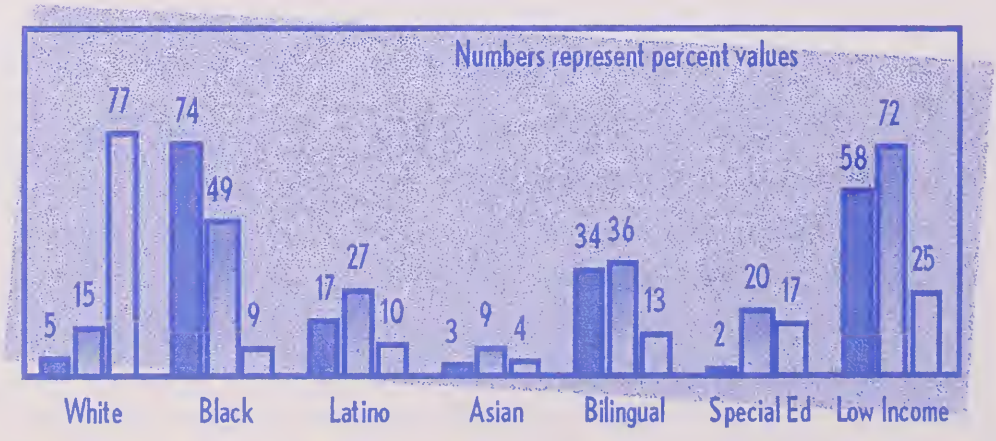
Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students at Health Careers with scores similar to their district counterparts in Math and Science & Technology and six points better than their district counterparts in English Language Arts.

Health Careers | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

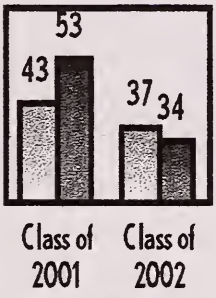


Health Careers | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

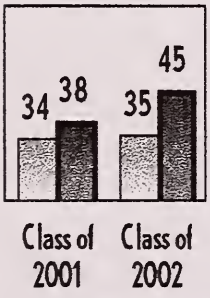
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of median percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress in the Class of 2001 and less than expected progress in the Class of 2002. Students in the Class of 2001 were above the national average in 2000.

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of median percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in the Class of 2001 and much greater than expected progress in the Class of 2002.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Haydenville (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-7
Enrollment, 1999-2000	109
Waiting List, 1999-2000	115
Application Rate, 1999-2000	8.1
In-District Transfer Rate	0.9%

School Leader: Amy Aaron
132 Main Street, Haydenville, MA 01039
Tel: 413 268 3421 Fax: 413 268 3185 E-mail: hccs@mediaone.net

Mission. The mission of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School is to involve students, teachers, parents, administrators, and members of the surrounding community in sustaining a non-discriminatory, rural learning environment drawing upon the Reggio Emillia approach. We believe that the innate curiosity and creativity of children stimulates exploration of the arts and sciences through an integrated curriculum leading to personal empowerment, critical thinking, joy of learning, and appreciation of the importance of diversity and cooperation.

With its strong sense of community, Hilltown Cooperative has has minimal discipline problems. It is the only charter school in Massachusetts to report no student suspensions in the last year, or in its entire six-year history.

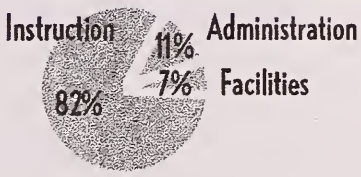
Description. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School uses a curriculum that draws heavily on the expressive arts as well as on student's own experiences to spur creative thinking. Students explore lessons and present their learning through the "multiple languages" of writing, art, music, movement, construction, and drama. For example, in 1999-2000, students who studied the Middle Ages in their social studies class learned music from the Middle Ages,

performed period dances, and held a school-wide Middle Ages fair, in addition to researching and writing a report on a related topic such as feudalism, castles, or the crusades.

The school's progressive philosophy is evident not only in its arts classes, but in various aspects of school life designed to be centered on students and structured by their teachers. Students are grouped by developmental ability in multi-age classrooms. In many classes, they are polled by their teachers to determine what they are interested in learning, then find ways to integrate these lessons into the Massachusetts (MCAS) frameworks and the school's focus on the arts. Every Wednesday morning, students take mini-courses offered by parents and teachers on subjects as diverse as cooking, swing dancing, and building musical instruments.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	12:1
Average Experience	6 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$687,647
Per Pupil Expenditure	$6,309
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,435



With its strong sense of community, Hilltown Cooperative has had minimal discipline problems. It is the only charter school in Massachusetts to report no student suspensions in the last year, or in its entire six-year history.

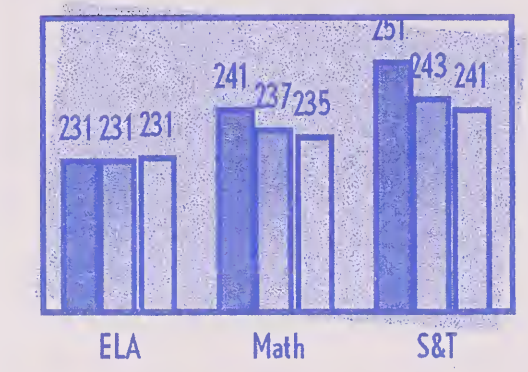
Origin. Parents in the rural communities of Hampshire county wanted a child-centered elementary school program in which teachers would have the ability to pursue the creative impulses of children in the classroom. One of the school's founders described the original motivation as a "desire to create an environment that stimulates the natural creativity of children."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Arts-integrated, project-based
Size at Full Capacity	Serving grades K-8 in 2000
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	MTThF 8:30-3:00; W 8:30-12:30
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Not centralized.
Computers	6:1 student:computer ratio
Management	Self managed

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School

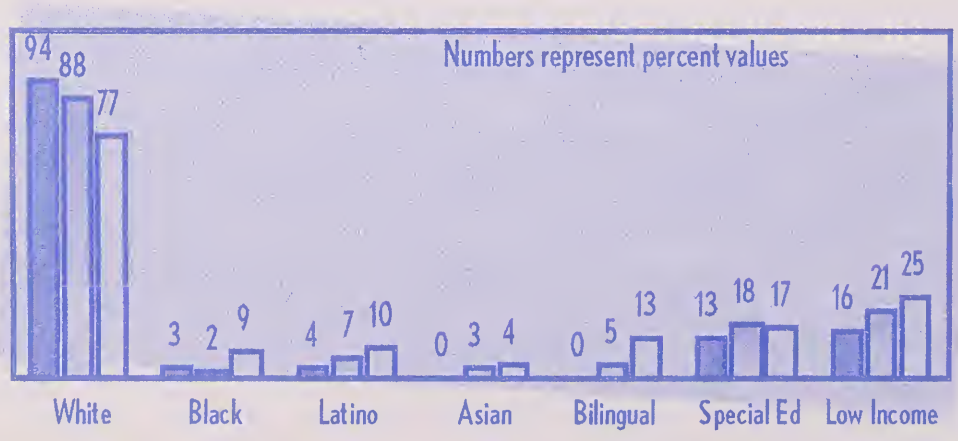
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows Hilltown students scoring similarly to their district counterparts in English Language Arts and outperforming their district counterparts by four points in Math and eight points in Science & Technology.

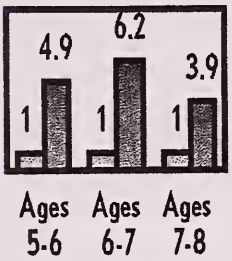
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



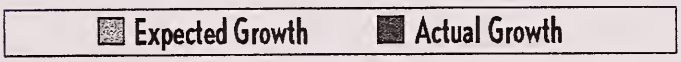
All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Age Groupings)

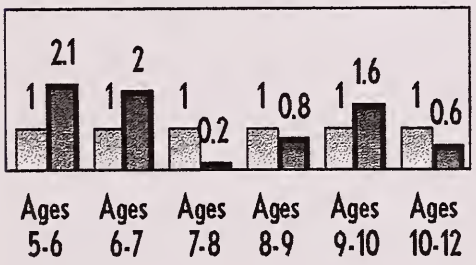
One-Year Growth in Reading Scores, Expected vs. Actual



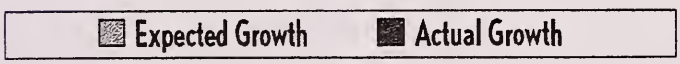
To measure students' reading ability, Hilltown administers the DRA Reading assessment to students aged 5-8 at the beginning and end of the year. Students are expected to progress one level over the year. The graph at left compares this expected growth with the actual average growth for each age grouping. Students in every age grouping averaged considerably more than one level of growth over the year, with students aged 6-7 registering the largest growth, increasing an average of 6.2 levels.



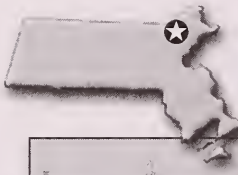
One-Year Growth in Writing Scores, Expected vs. Actual



To measure students' writing skills, Hilltown uses an internally developed writing rubric and records student growth from the beginning to the end of the year. Students are expected to progress one level over the year. Average actual progress is shown in the bar on the right for each age group. Students aged 5-6, 6-7, and 9-10 averaged greater than expected progress.



* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.



Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Lawrence
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	428
Waiting List, 1999-2000	111
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.2
In-District Transfer Rate	0.2%

School Leader: Sunita Mehrota
34 West Street, Lawrence, MA 01841
Tel: 978 689 9863 Fax: 978 689 8133 E-mail: lawrencefamily_dcs@lfdcs.org
http://www.lfdcs.homestead.com

Mission. At Lawrence Family Development Charter School, strong families, working in partnership with the school as advocates for academic achievement, will create an environment where every child has the opportunity to acquire the foundation skills and habits of mind that foster life-long learning, citizenship participation, and personal fulfillment.

Description. The Lawrence Family Development Charter School provides a unique and community-relevant curriculum designed to embrace the Hispanic community of surrounding Lawrence. The school seeks to integrate family and cultural values into the governance and curriculum of the school.

Every classroom at Lawrence Family Development Charter School has one teacher or aide who is fluent in English and one who is fluent in Spanish, giving students a thoroughly bilingual education.

Students are taught in both Spanish and English every day, with a number of fully bilingual staff and assistants. Every classroom at Lawrence Family Development Charter School has one teacher or aide who is fluent in English and one who is fluent in Spanish, giving students a thoroughly bilingual education.

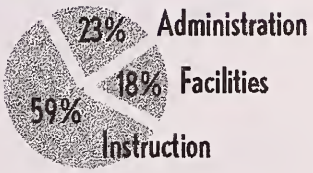
Class size is limited to 20 students in elementary grades and 14 students in middle school grades. The school offers a six-week Summer

Institute for students who are struggling, that directly links summer work to work during the academic year

Lawrence Family Development uses community partnerships to provide students with music lessons at nearby Phillips Academy, physical education classes at the YWCA, health services from the local health center, science facilities at the local community college, and art instruction provided by local artists and two artists-in-residence supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Students at every grade level participate in community service projects ranging from park cleanups to food and clothing collection for the poor.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	14:1
Average Experience	8.6 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$3,281,680
Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,667
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,530



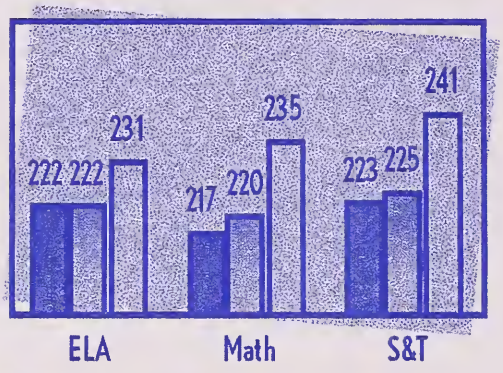
Origin. The Lawrence Family Development Charter School educates the children of Hispanic newcomers and immigrants and provides them and their families with better opportunities for the future. Lawrence Family Development was founded in 1995 by a coalition of Hispanic parents and community leaders who were dissatisfied with the local public school's inability to be responsive to the academic, language, cultural, and developmental needs of their children. The idea for the school started with Patricia Karl, a former public school teacher who said the school became a reality thanks to "parents committed to access to quality education for their own children, and community activists committed to access to quality education for all children."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Bilingual education
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:00
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	2,000 volumes
Computers	7:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

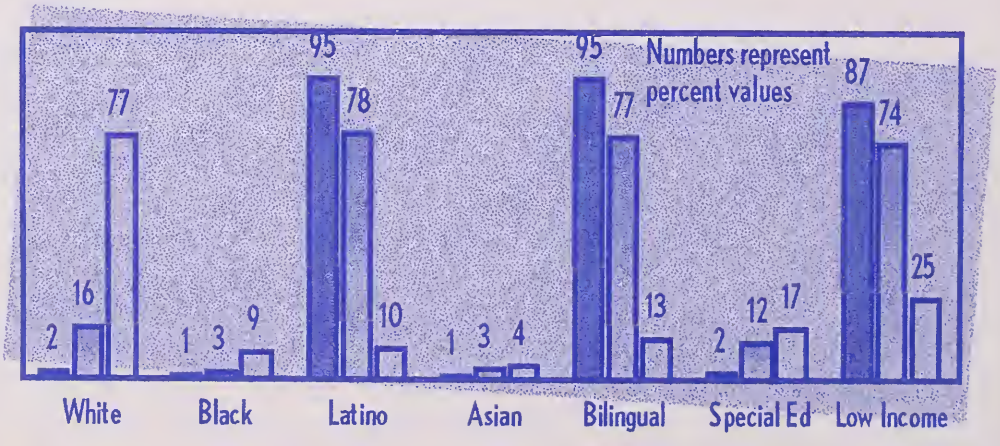
Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in English/Language Arts and Science & Technology and slightly below their district counterparts in Math.

Lawrence Family Development | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

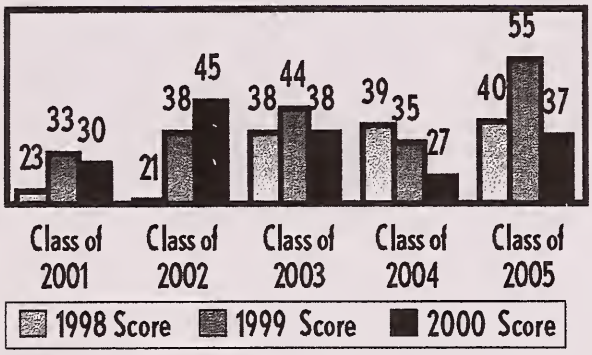


Lawrence Family Development | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

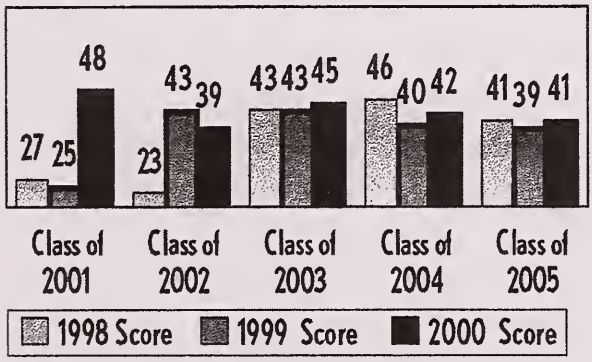
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1998 through 2000



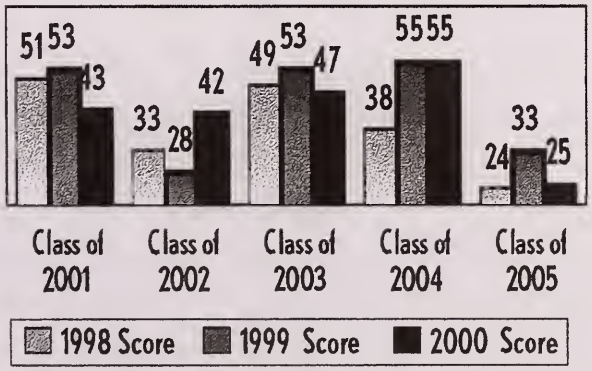
A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2001 and 2002, and slower progress in the Classes of 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Language, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress in the classes of 2001 and 2002, and expected progress in the Classes of 2003 and 2005.

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 through 2000



A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2002 and 2004 and normal progress in the Class of 2005.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Lowell
Grades Served, 1999-2000	9-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	118
Waiting List, 1999-2000	103
Application Rate, 1999-2000	4.6
In-District Transfer Rate	23.7%*

School Leader: Lisa Bryant
33 Kearney Square, Lowell, MA 01852
Tel: 978 656 0170 Fax: 978 459 0546

Mission. The mission of the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School is to enable its students to achieve academic, social, and career success. This supportive school community identifies, encourages, and develops interests and abilities while acknowledging and respecting each student's personal and cultural identity.

Description. Lowell Middlesex Academy is a non-graded, college preparatory high school for former high school dropouts. A member of the Middle College High School National Consortium, Lowell Middlesex is also the first and only charter school in Massachusetts to be accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Lowell Middlesex Academy is the first and only charter school in Massachusetts to be accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The school intends for every graduating student to have a clearly demonstrated set of academic skills, experience in the workplace and/or community service, a clear awareness of the rights and responsibilities of

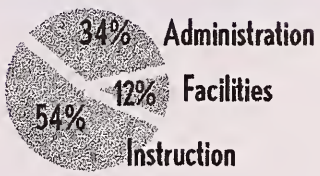
* Alternative schools often serve a student population significantly more likely to transfer than that of other schools.

United States citizens, and a personal development plan for the years beyond high school.

The school's curriculum and design reflect this mission. Its curriculum is built around a core of traditional instructional areas supplemented by psycho-educational courses and groups, a school-to-work component, daily advising, and enrollment in courses at Middlesex Community College. All students have Individualized Learning Plans, maintain academic portfolios, and meet with an advocate who is charged with building a relationship of confidence and trust. In addition to traditional offerings, class subjects include school-to-career, peer leadership, and conflict resolution. Monthly assemblies focus on the schools ten ethical values of respect, courage, responsibility, truthfulness, justice, unity, agape, achievement, freedom, and peace.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	6.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$860,692
Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,294
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$5,892



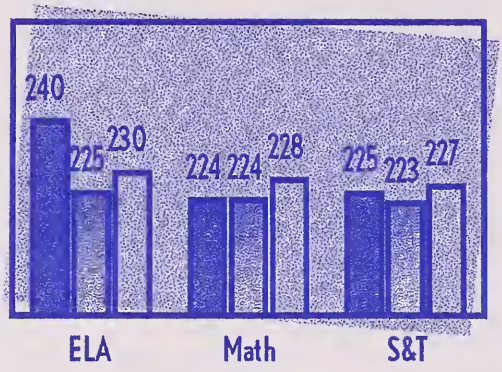
Origin. As part of a desegregation plan, the Lowell public schools had contracted with Middlesex Community College every year since 1989 to provide an alternative high school program consisting of remedial and academic instruction for students who had dropped out of Lowell High School. "With the Academy, we set out to create a safe and supportive school that encourages young adults who have fallen through the cracks," said the school's founding director. "Becoming a charter school has meant more flexibility to do our jobs well."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Dropout recovery, individual learning
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 9-12
Length of School Year	187 days
Length of School Day	8:00-6:00
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Access to college library
Computers	12:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

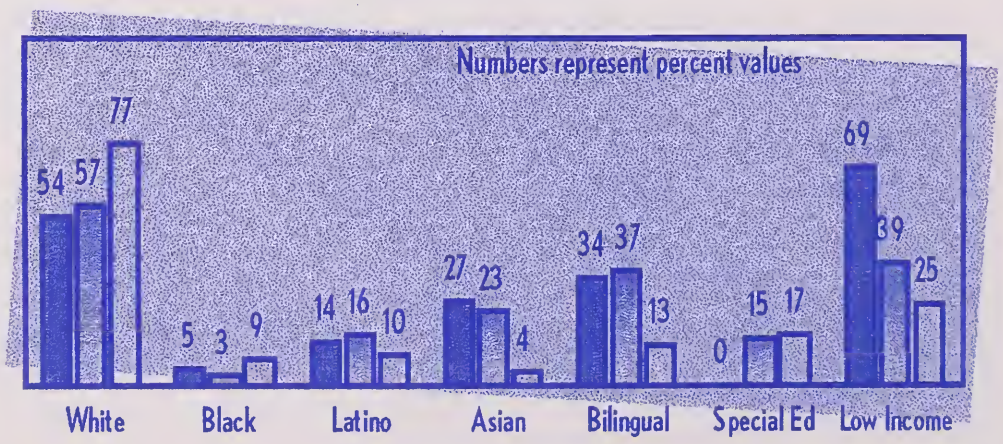
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 10



In comparing MCAS scores, it is important to note that the group of students at Lowell Middlesex Academy are out-of-school youth and, as such, may not be reflective of the overall population of in-school youth who take the MCAS exam. A comparison shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in Math and Science & Technology and fifteen points higher than their district counterparts in English/Language Arts.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School uses the ACCUPLACE College Placement Exam to test students. The test, which is used to place students in college-level courses, is not norm-referenced. A graph of results is not presented here, because "expected" growth for high school students over the time period has not been clearly defined by those who designed the ACCUPLACE test.

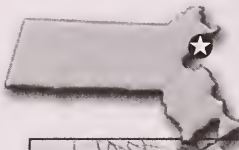
Algebra, Fall '99 to Spring '00

A comparison of scores on the Algebra ACCUPLACE test show student scores at Lowell Middlesex increasing from 65 at the beginning of the year to 71 at the end. This is about one quarter of the 20 points that correlates with one college-level course on that test.

Reading Comprehension, Fall '99 to Spring '00

A comparison of scores on the Reading Comprehension ACCUPLACE test show student scores at Lowell Middlesex increasing from 39 at the beginning of the year to 64 at the end. This is about two times the normal 12 points that correlates with about one college-level course on that test, indicating strong student progress in this area.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.



Lynn Community Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1997

Opened	1997
Location	Lynn
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	240
Waiting List, 1999-2000	106
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.79
In-District Transfer Rate	5.0%

School Leaders: Lisa Drake and Amy Marx
106 Broad Street ,Lynn, MA 01902
Tel: 781 477 0312 Fax: 781 581 6124 E-mail: lccs@shore.net

Mission. The mission of the Lynn Community Charter School is to build a community of students, teachers, family members, friends, business owners, and other Lynn Community members who will commit to each other's growth on a daily basis. It is their belief that young people are naturally curious, intelligent, and creative beings, needing only to be reminded of their true nature in order to excel in learning and to live powerfully and courageously. LCSS is based on the belief that each young person and adult brings individual, family, and cultural assets to the community and that an atmosphere of cooperation and celebration, rather than competition, is the most effective way to nurture these attributes.

Each classroom at Lynn Community works to foster a community where faculty, students, and parents are all pulling in the same direction to attain high achievement for every student.

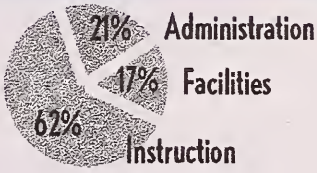
Description. Lynn Community Charter School's curriculum is based on hands-on, inquiry-based instruction. Classrooms consist of both single and mixed grades and are organized into clusters. For example, the first/second grade cluster has a single first grade of twenty students, a single second grade of twenty and a combined first/second grade of twenty. Each grade

cluster pursues a year-long essential question that guides the curriculum. In 1999-2000, the third/fourth grade pursued the question, "How and why do we depend on one another," while the fifth/sixth grade asked, "What influences communities to change?" These questions and the projects that go with them are designed and revised by Lynn's faculty each year.

Student work is assessed on fourteen essential skills and habits: listening, speaking, reading, writing, working independently and in groups, interacting socially, questioning, analyzing information, social studies, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative arts, and physical fitness. The school uses a variety of assessment methods, dubbed the Lynn Community Charter School Comprehensive Assessment System. This includes working classroom portfolios, narrative student reports, benchmark assessments in reading and writing taken twice a year, and student exhibitions each spring. After-school tutoring is provided for students who are significantly behind in reading or writing. In order to reinforce the connection between home and school, each classroom works to foster a community where faculty, students, and parents are all pulling in the same direction to attain high achievement for every student.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	8:1
Average Experience	3.6 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,057,901
Per Pupil Expenditure	$8,575
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,173



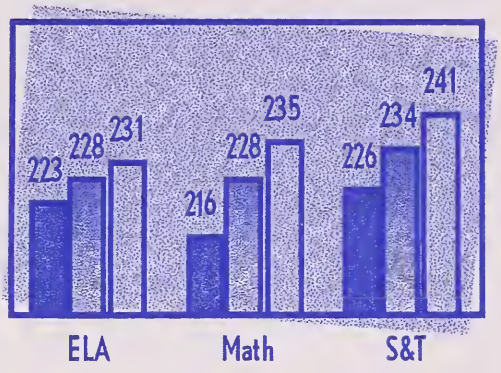
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Waldorf and Essential Schools
Size at Full Capacity	Serving grades K-8 in 2000
Length of School Year	184 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:00 MTWF; 8:00-1:00 Th
School Meetings	Friday Sing weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	2,500 volumes
Computers	8:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Origin. The founding coalition of Lynn Community Charter School collaborated to bring into being a school community that would truly reflect and celebrate the richness of Lynn's heritage. The coalition consisted primarily of parents, educators, and social service providers from the community.

Lynn Community Charter School

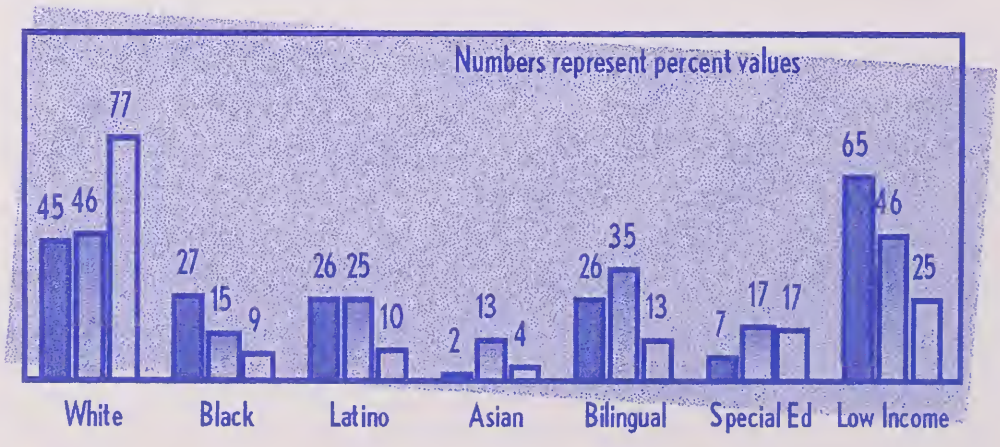
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students being outperformed by their counterparts in the surrounding districts by five to twelve points.

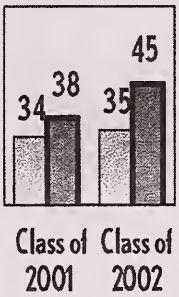
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

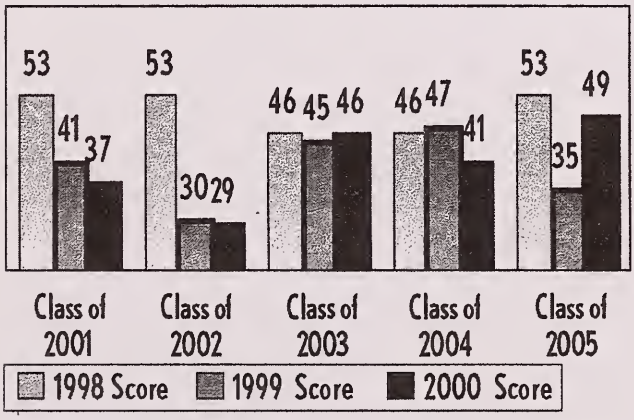
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



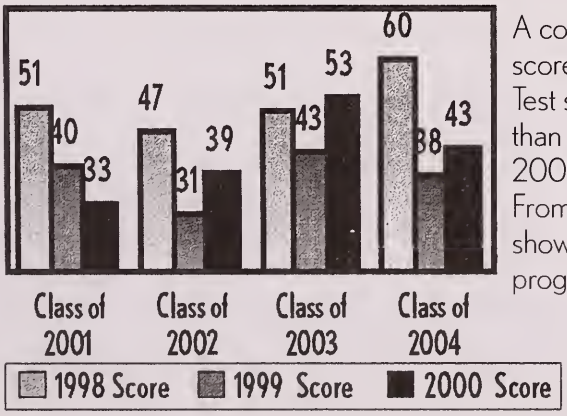
A comparison of median percentile scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than expected progress in the Class of 2001, and much greater than expected progress in the Class of 2002.

Literacy, CAT Percentile Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of median percentile scores on the California Achievement Test shows students making expected progress in the Class of 2003 and strong progress from 1999 to 2000 in the Class of 2005.

Science, CAT Percentile Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of median percentile scores on the California Achievement Test shows students making greater than expected progress from 1999 to 2000 in every class except 2001. From 1998 to 1999, however, students showed significantly less academic progress.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Marblehead Community Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Marblehead
Grades Served, 1999-2000	5-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	176
Waiting List, 1999-2000	123
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.5
In-District Transfer Rate	0.6%

School Leader: Thomas Commeret
17 Lime Street, Marblehead, MA 01945
Tel: 781 631 0777 Fax: 781 631 0500 E-mail: jabmccps@hotmail.com
http://www.marbleheadcharter.com

Mission. The mission of Marblehead Community Charter School is to create a partnership among community members, teachers, parents, and students that will provide early adolescents with the support necessary to reach their highest individual potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically, so they can become contributing members of our democratic society.

Description. Marblehead Community uses a curriculum that is experientially based, with projects designed to motivate the adolescent learner. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate proficiency in a core set of thirteen essential skills and ten essential habits in the study of language, mathematics, social and applied science, and the arts. These skills and habits are taught using interdisciplinary themes developed by the Marblehead faculty and staff. In a daily enrichment period, students also have access to a variety of classes taught by parents and community members.

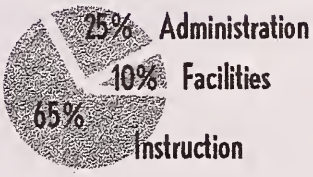
At the beginning of each year, every student and par-

Marblehead's innovative curriculum has been the subject of presentations at the National Charter School Conference, the National Conference of Teachers of Mathematics, the Harvard Teachers Network, the Harvard Principal's Center, and the Coalition of Essential Schools.

ent at Marblehead is involved in developing an Individual Learning Plan, in which each student sets individual learning goals. Each trimester, students study essential questions using a given theme and complete a variety of exhibition projects on that theme. All projects are designed to be rigorous, interdisciplinary, and allow sufficient room for individual ability, choice, and autonomy. This innovative curriculum has been the subject of presentations at the National Charter School Conference, the National Conference of Teachers of Mathematics, the Harvard Teachers Network, the Harvard Principal's Center, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and was highlighted as one of five "shining examples of rethinking the way we educate" in the *Boston Globe*.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	8:1
Average Experience	8.7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,479,470
Per Pupil Expenditures	$8,406
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,206



The school's emphasis on community involvement is designed to highlight each student's role as a democratic citizen. Each school day begins with an assembly of students, faculty, and staff. Students and staff participate in democratic decision-making regarding school issues in schoolwide town meetings. All students, faculty and administrators participate in daily chores and assume communal responsibility for upkeep of the building.

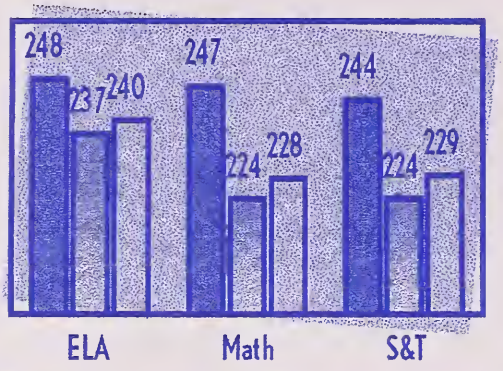
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Inquiry-based, individualized learning
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 5-8
Length of School Year	185 days
Length of School Day	7:45-3:15
School Meetings	Every morning
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Internet library
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Origin. Marblehead Community Charter was founded by a coalition led by several members of the Marblehead Public Schools Vision and Steering Committee who felt that their recommendations for reform had been ignored. These parents and community leaders wanted a small, experiential, student-centered alternative to the town's regular middle school.

Marblehead Community Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

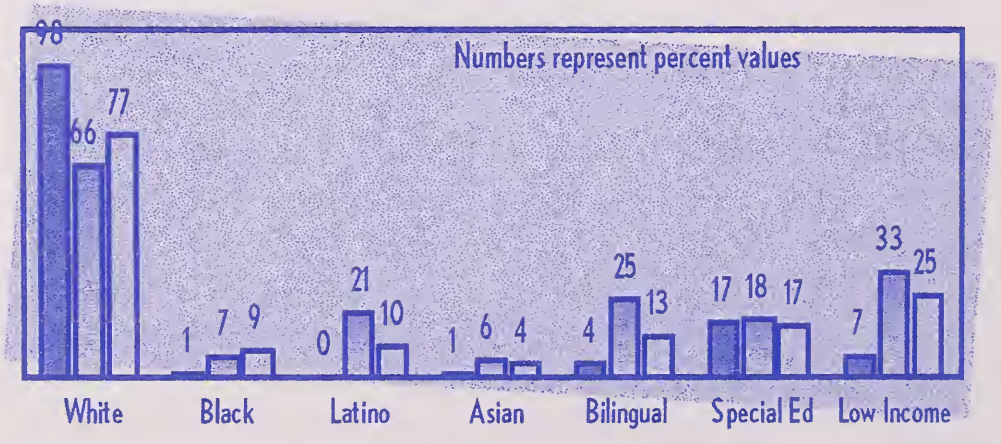
Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores eleven points higher in English/Language Arts, twenty points higher in Science & Technology, and 23 points higher in Math than their district counterparts.

Marblehead Charter | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

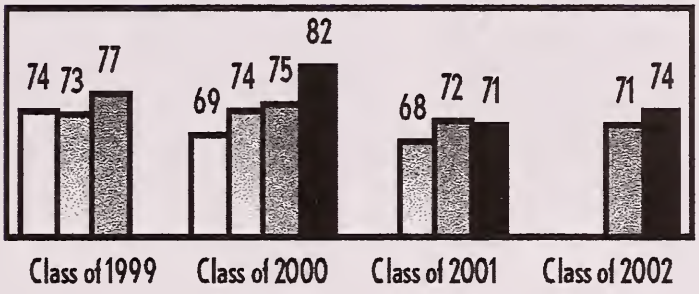


Marblehead Charter | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Overall, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1997 through 2000



Marblehead Community Charter School has consistently tracked Stanford-9 normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores for all students at the school. The graph above shows national percentile rank for students for as many years as they were at the school. This shows that virtually every class has improved since entering Marblehead Community Charter School, with the Class of 2000 showing the most dramatic improvement from 69th percentile upon entering to 82nd percentile upon graduating. Every class has shown progress that is greater than expected or much greater than expected for at least one year. All classes were above the national average as well.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Martha's Vineyard Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1995

Opened	1996
Location	West Tisbury
Grades Served, 1999-2000	1-11
Enrollment, 1999-2000	145
Waiting List, 1999-2000	89
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.0
In-District Transfer Rate	4.8%

School Leader: Robert Moore
P.O. Box 1150, West Tisbury, MA 02575
Tel: 508 693 9900 Fax: 508 696 9008 E-mail: mvpcs.org
http://www.mvpcs.org

Mission. The mission of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is to create a public school that will cultivate life-long learners in a multi-aged, project-based setting. Within an environment that models interdependence as the foundation of society, the individual student will direct his/her own learning; the group will make decisions together and recognize the unique contributions of each member; the community will support and interact with the school body.

Description. After starting their day with the school-wide daily "Morning Meeting," Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School students engage in classroom work that is interdisciplinary and project-based. Some examples from the 1999-2000 school year include a dinosaur study by the school's six- and seven-year-olds that included poetry, Latin, story writing, games, art, and math; a study of archaeological digs by eight- and nine-year-olds; and a study of creation myths by twelve- and thirteen-year-olds. Students pres-

In 1999-2000, Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School's unique community mentorship program allowed students to participate in weekly lessons in everything from photography, oil painting, or web site design to psychotherapy, chiropractic, dance, horseback riding, and boat-building.

ent their work in individual and group presentations, exhibitions, and portfolios that are assessed by teachers. They also engage in self-assessments and peer evaluations using rubrics that have been developed by both teachers and students.

The school's curriculum is designed not only to coalesce around projects, but also to be individualized for each student. Each student works from an individualized Personal Education Plan (PEP), which takes into account that student's strengths, challenges, preferences, and socio-emotional development levels. Younger students spend a portion of each week in "explore time" and use "discovery centers" in their classrooms, while older students engage in independent study projects guided by teachers. A mentorship program for middle and high school students matches students with community members who have mentored students in such areas as photography, psychotherapy, woodwork, and creative writing. An Artists-in-Residence program gives students still more exposure to a variety of art-based and other creative experiences once a week.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	7:1
Average Experience	10.3 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,525,453
Per Pupil Expenditures	$10,520
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$10,013

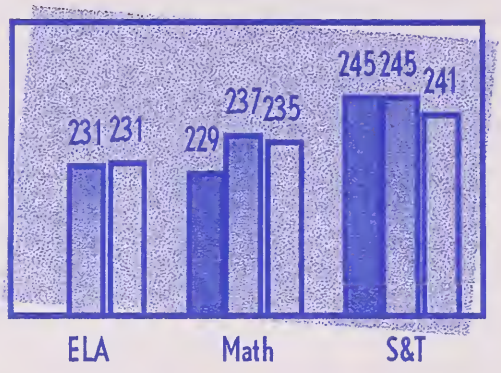
Origin. Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School was started by a coalition of over 100 parents, educators, and other interested community members from across the Island who wanted to create an alternative educational opportunity centered around experiential, project-based learning. "There was a need for a regional school offering island families a choice of a truly learner-centered alternative," one of the founders recalls.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Project-based, individualized learning
Size at Full Capacity	Serving grades K-12 in 2000
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:05-3:00
School Meetings	Daily
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	3,600 volumes
Computers	6:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

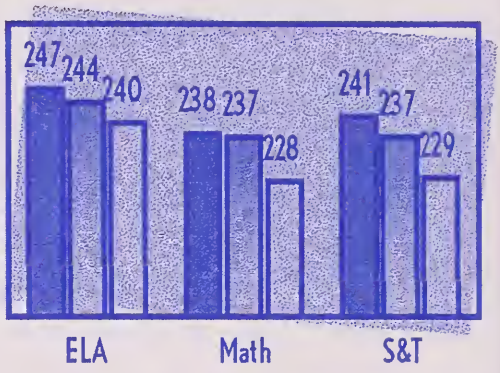
Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

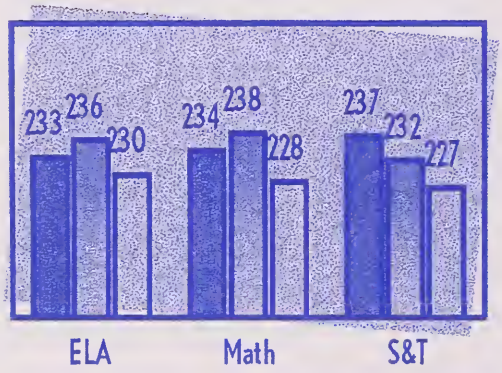
Grade 4



Grade 8

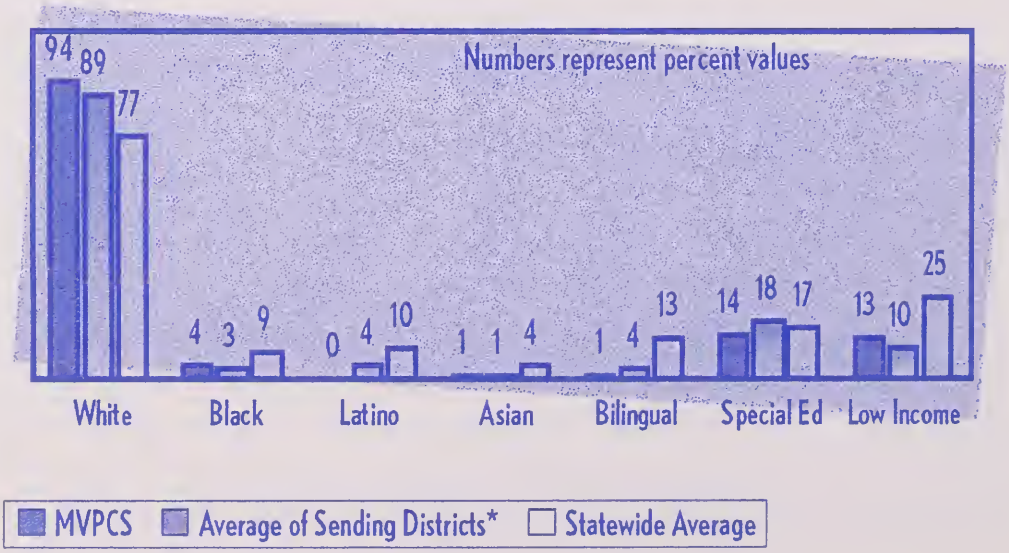


Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores comparable to or below their district counterparts in Math, comparable to or above their district counterparts in Science & Technology, and ranging from three points below to three points above their counterparts in English/Language Arts. (Note that not enough fourth graders took the ELA MCAS to report their scores.)

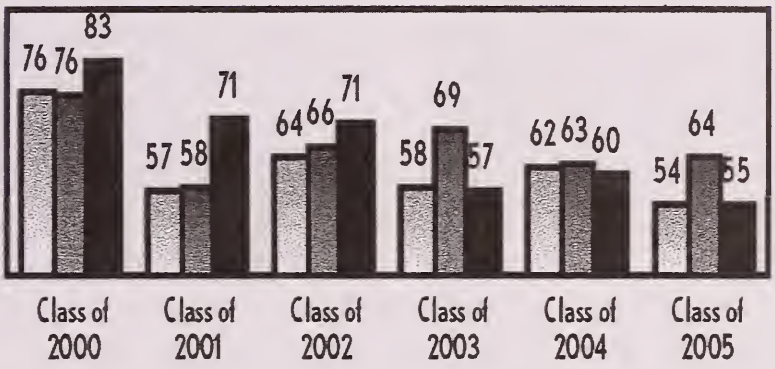
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Overall, Terra Nova NCE Scores, 1997 through 1999



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores (NCE) on the Terra Nova shows that over the two-year period, the oldest students at Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School (Classes of 2000 and 2001) made much greater than expected growth. Students in the Class of 2002 made greater than expected growth, and students in the Classes of 2003, 2004, and 2005, returned by 1999 to the same level with respect to the norm as they had been in 1997. All classes scored above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Murdoch Middle Public Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1995

Opened	1996
Location	Chelmsford
Grades Served, 1999-2000	5-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	207
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	5.0
In-District Transfer Rate	3.9%

School Leader: Susan Jamback
197 Littleton Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824
Tel: 978 250 8815 Fax: 978 250 5975 E-mail: sjamback@beaconedu.com
http://www.cpcs.chtr.k12.ma.us

Mission. The mission of the Murdoch Middle Public Charter School (formerly Chelmsford Public Charter School) is to provide students with a challenging interdisciplinary education that will prepare them for the 21st century through an emphasis on holistic learning, higher order and critical thinking skills, and practical application and integration of curriculum areas.

Description. Murdoch Middle School is founded on the principles of systems thinking and system dynamics, with the school's traditions, culture, and instructional practice intended to support a high level of reflection and continuous assessment and adjustment among staff, students, and parents. The school's curriculum is interdisciplinary, project-based, and student-centered, with an emphasis on hands-on learning and real-world application of lessons.

In 1999-2000, thirty-six Murdoch Middle School students qualified to participate in the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search, and nine were recognized as Johns Hopkins Scholars.

Students are graded in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish. Progress is tracked in terms of students' achievement of proficiency and comprehension in each area. Students also

focus on problem solving, self-direction, effective communication, and community membership. At the end of every week, parents receive a Murdoch Middle School Friday Folder, which contains a letter from the home-base teacher and students and a letter from the director of the school. Twice a year, students present portfolios of their work to outside jurors, and twice a year they prepare exhibitions of work, for parents and community members to evaluate for clarity, accuracy, fluency, clarity of expression, and overall quality. In 1999-2000, thirty-six Murdoch Middle School students qualified to participate in the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search, and nine were recognized as Johns Hopkins Scholars.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	13:1
Average Experience	6.2 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,466,853
Per Pupil Expenditure	$7,086
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,426

Origin. The school was founded by the Chelmsford Alliance for Education, a coalition of community members, parents and businesses that has been working since 1992 to improve public education in Chelmsford. Members of this coalition, a number of whom are engineers and scientists, wanted to create a different middle school option that would better prepare children for the academic challenges of high school and college. "Change was happening in some places, but we wanted it to happen faster," says one of the school's founders. "I wanted it to happen in time for my kids to benefit."

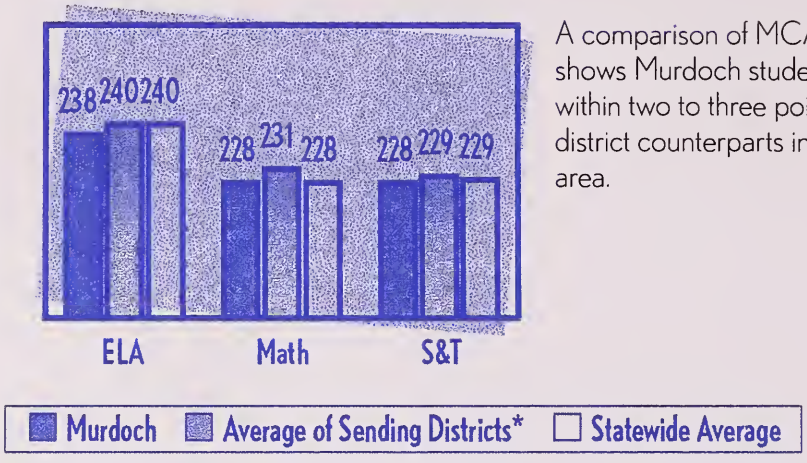
Originally known at Chelmsford Public Charter School, last year the school was renamed in memory of Linn Murdoch, one of the school's founding board members.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Interdisciplinary, project-based
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 5-8
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	7:45-2:45
School Meetings	Twice weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	2000 volumes
Computers	6:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Beacon Education Management

Murdoch Middle Public Charter School

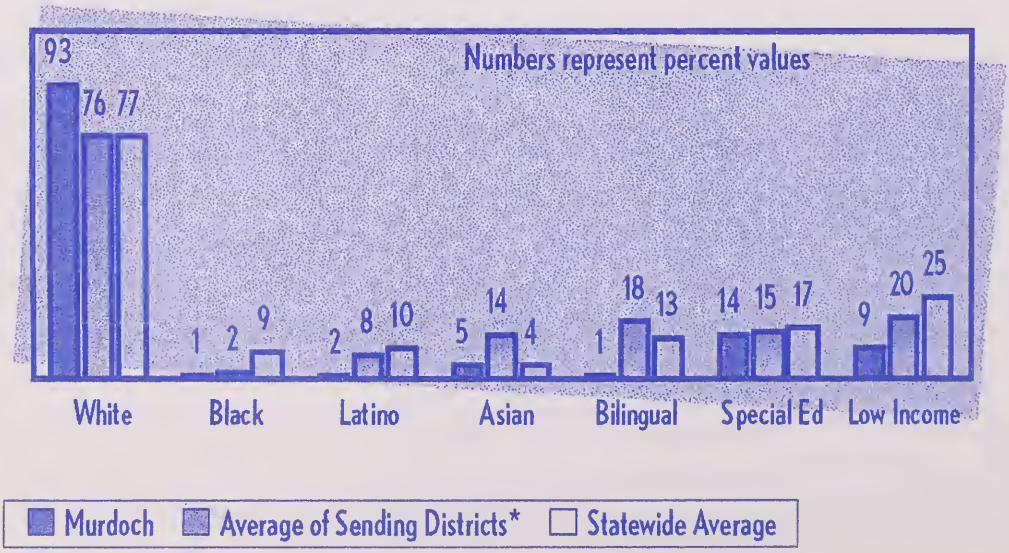
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows Murdoch students scoring within two to three points of their district counterparts in each subject area.

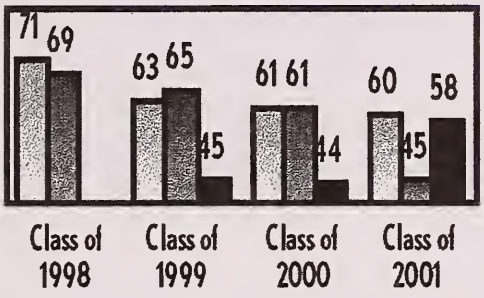
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Percent of Students with High MAT Scores, 1997 through 1999



Murdoch Middle School has tracked the percent of its student body with percentile scores in the upper third of the score range (i.e., 66th percentile) on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. For instance, in 1997, 71 percent of the students in the Class of 1998 had a score above the 66th percentile. Over the two years, every class has posted expected or less than expected progress.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Malden (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-6
Enrollment, 1999-2000	655
Waiting List, 1999-2000	831
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.1
In-District Transfer Rate	2.1%

School Leader: Anthony Biegler
770 Salem Street, Malden, MA 02148
Tel: 781 388 0222 Fax: 781 388 0777 E-mail: first initial last name @mvrcs.net
http://www.mvrcs.com

Mission. The Mystic Valley Regional Charter School was founded on the following principle: that a first-rate education is the birthright of every child, that all children can learn, and that every child should be challenged to reach his or her full potential.

Description. Mystic Valley opened to grades K-5 in 1998. It will expand one grade per year until it is a full K-12 school. At the cornerstone of the school's elementary program is Direct Instruction, a highly structured program for elementary reading, language, and mathematics. Lessons are presented in a structured sequence, with each one building on concepts and skills developed previously in the series. The curriculum in reading, language and writing, spelling, math, science, and history all emphasize basic facts and concepts, while stressing the importance of critical thinking.

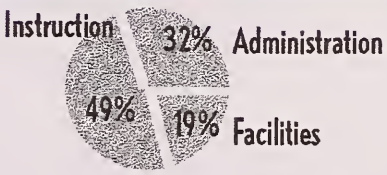
As improved school assessment is promoted on the state and national level, Mystic Valley is already ahead of the game, carefully assessing students every in math and English every two weeks to help every student progress at his or her own pace.

Students are taught in small student groupings based on demonstrated competency in reading, language, and mathematics. Instructional groups

range from six to 20 students per teacher. Within each group, there is a high level of interaction between teachers and students in every lesson. Students are assessed in math and English every two weeks. Based on these assessments, students advance individually from group to group when they are able to demonstrate proficiency in the subject being taught.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	14:1
Average Experience	3 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$4,461,556
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,812
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,812



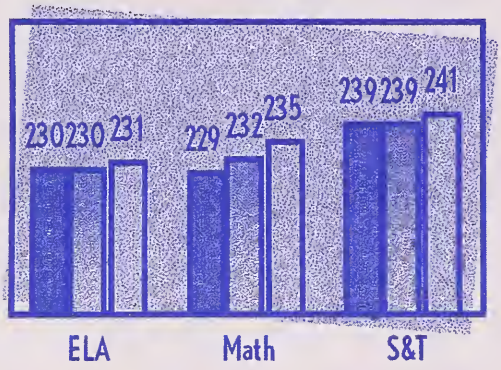
Origin. Mystic Valley Regional Charter School was founded by a group of parents and business, community, and political leaders in Malden who shared a "common belief that every child can learn, that every child is entitled to an education, and that if we put our minds together we could provide an effective alternative" to what was available, according to one of the founders. After exploring a variety of avenues to do this, the group decided to submit a charter application.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Direct Instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades K-12 in 2005
Length of School Year	200 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:30
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	1,200 volumes
Computers	15:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Beacon Education Management, Inc.

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

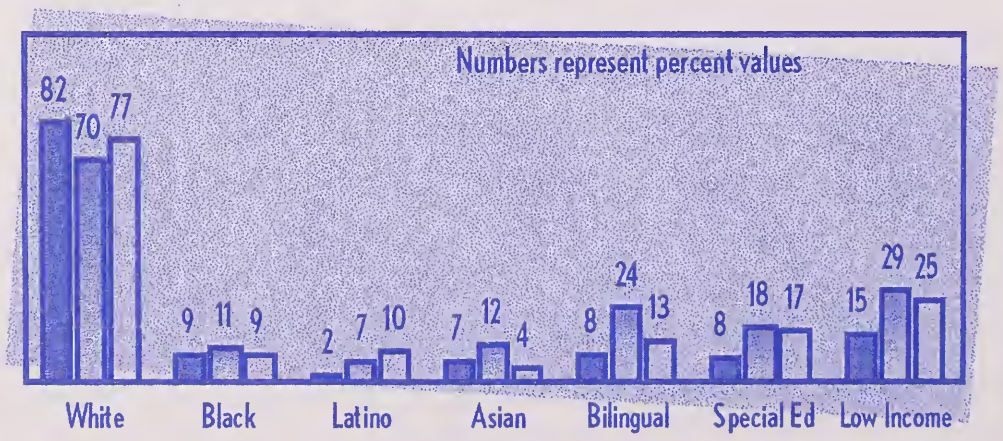
Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows Mystic Valley students with scores comparable to those of students in the surrounding districts in English/Language Arts and Science & Technology and three points lower in Math.

Mystic Valley | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

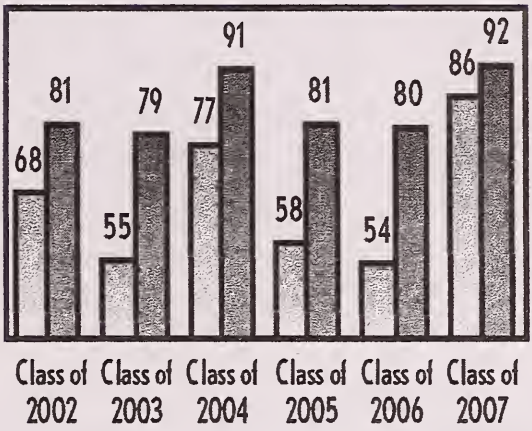


Mystic Valley | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Overall, ITBS Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of percentile scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills shows every class posting much greater than expected progress. All scores are also above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Neighborhood House Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K1-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	180
Waiting List, 1999-2000	1051
Application Rate, 1999-2000	15.8
In-District Transfer Rate	0.6%

School Leader: Kevin Andrews
197A Centre Street , Boston, MA 02124
Tel: 617 825 0703 Fax: 617 825 1829

Mission. The mission of Neighborhood House is (1) to develop in each child the love of learning, a keen sense of responsibility for self, family, and community and the ability to engage in critical thinking; (2) to ensure that each child can demonstrate complete mastery of the building blocks necessary for a successful future; and (3) to support families and children with a broad range of social support and health services.

Description. The philosophy of Neighborhood House is highlighted in the four key goals of its educational program. First, the school's "Succeed Anywhere" standard holds that all students will be well prepared to enter a high-quality urban, suburban, vocational, or private secondary school, including schools focused on college preparation, technical trades, and/or creative arts.

Neighborhood House Charter School's Dorchester Community Campus offers social services, adult education classes, and a variety of partnerships for students to get hands-on experience with community professionals, artisans, and trades people.

Second, the school's Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) approach is based on the belief that a student's performance should be measured against his/her individual goals and

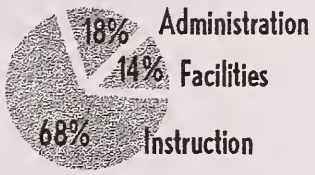
grade level. An ILP is developed and revised by teachers and parents for every student and family, with students assessed and goals revisited against the plan five times throughout the year. Specialist help is available for students at all levels and summer math and literacy institutes are offered for students who are struggling.

Third, NHCS strives to integrate science/technology and the creative arts into all areas of instruction, with children in grades K1-5 attending art class, music class, and KidLab, a science-art program, at least once a week.

Fourth, NHCS is a Full-Service School model, using partnerships with expert professionals, artisans, and trades people in the community to provide unique learning and social service opportunities. The school's Dorchester Community Adult Education program provides classes for neighborhood adults, and its Dorchester Community Campus comprises a variety of service partnerships.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	6:1
Average Experience	5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,362,170
Per Pupil Expenditures	$13,123
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,564



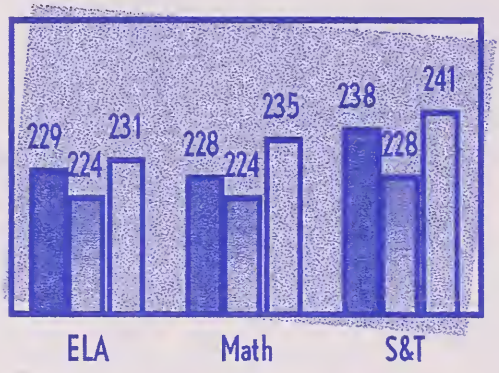
Origin. The charter school is an outgrowth of the nonprofit Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, Inc., a community-based educational and social service organization operating in Dorchester for over thirty years. "Our vision was of a community learning center that joins together education, social services, and families under one roof in Dorchester," the school's founder recalls.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Individualized instruction
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K1-8
Length of School Year	185 days
Length of School Day	K1-5 8:15-3:15; grades 6-8 8:30-3:30
School Meetings	Friday Town Meetings
Student Dress Code	Dress code (middle school)
Library	2,000 volumes
Computers	12:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Federated Dorchester Nbrhd. Houses

Neighborhood House Charter School

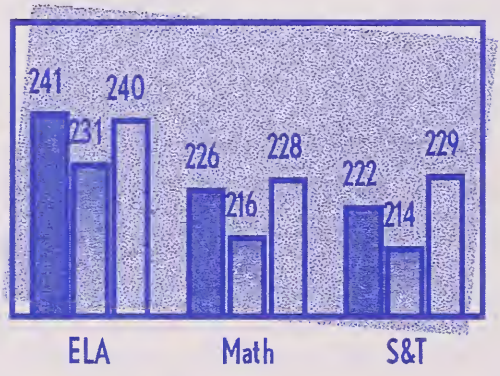
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



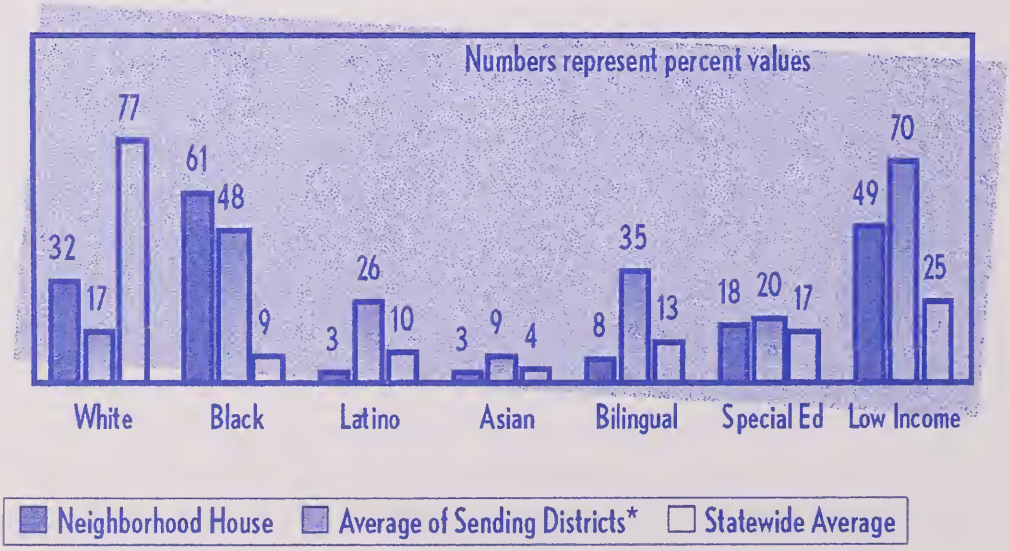
A comparison of MCAS scores shows students outperforming their counterparts in the surrounding school districts by four to ten points.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students outperforming their counterparts from surrounding districts by six points in Science & Technology and ten points each in English/Language Arts and Math.

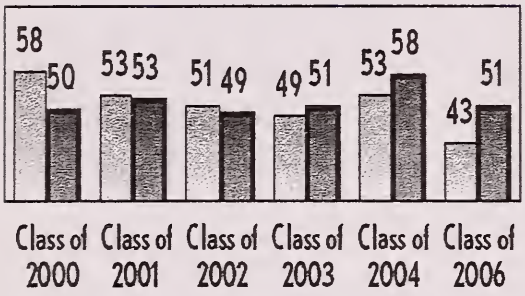
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

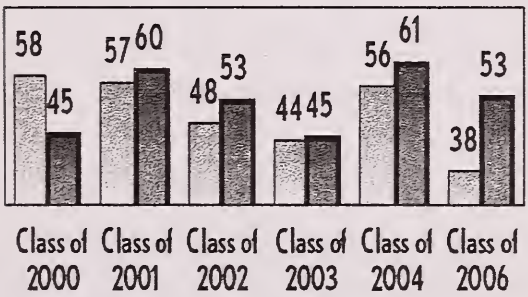
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of weighted national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making greater than normal progress in the Classes of 2004 and 2006, normal progress in the previous three classes, and below normal progress in the Class of 2000. All but one class scored at or above the national average in 2000.**

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of weighted national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than normal progress in the Classes of 2004 and 2006, greater than normal progress in the Classes of 2001 and 2002, normal progress in the Class of 2003, and below normal progress in the Class of 2000. All but two classes scored above the national average in 2000.**

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

** Data for the Class of 2005 was not available in the school's annual reports.

New Leadership Charter School

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Springfield
Grades Served, 1999-2000	6-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	150
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.1
In-District Transfer Rate	10.0%

School Leader: Joann Wingood Goubourn
160 Park Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089
Tel: 413 750 2454 Fax: 413 750 2456

Mission. New Leadership Charter School strives to develop young people in the sixth through twelfth grades morally, mentally, and physically; to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty; to prepare students to attend a college or university of their choice; and to foster three cardinal principles of leadership: vision, integrity, and compassion.

Description. New Leadership Charter School approaches education through the twin goals of academic excellence and personal leadership. It emphasizes a social and emotionally responsive classroom, foundational knowledge, reflective academic studies, active physical and leadership training, and public service.

Forty-three New Leadership students learned to pilot planes in the 1999-2000 school year as part of a program aimed at broadening students' horizons and generating awareness of careers in aviation.

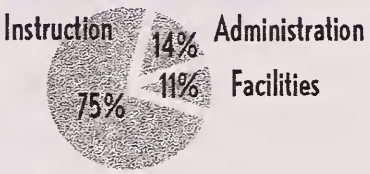
The majority of incoming NLCS students score below grade level in reading and math. The school aims to get all students at or above grade level within two or three years. With the help of Learning Styles, Inc., NLCS has created a literacy program tailored to the individual needs and skills of each student. The Summer Skills Building Program, focusing on math and reading, is required for the most underachieving students. To ensure the mainte-

nance of academic standards throughout the school, NLCS demands that teachers submit objectives and assessments to the director every quarter. Students complete one-and-a-half to two hours of homework daily, and are expected to begin work as soon as they enter a classroom. They attend school for four hours on Saturdays.

Leadership skills are developed through a collaboration with the Massachusetts National Guard. Students participate in two week-long leadership courses: a residential camp during the summer and day training during February vacation. NLCS promotes long-term preparation and awareness of college and career options. Students attend a number of conferences and workshops on college campuses. In collaboration with Westfield State College, 50 students attend the Careers in Aviation for Minority Youth Program, which teaches students about careers in aviation as well as science and math concepts and principles.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,667,280
Per Pupil Expenditures	$11,115
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,300



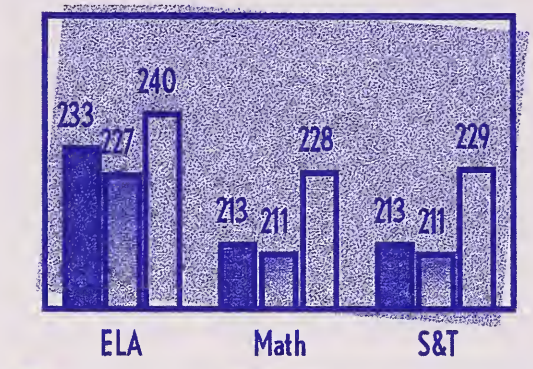
Origin. When legislation allowing Horace Mann charter schools was passed in 1997, a group of leaders from the Urban League and the National Guard saw a unique opportunity to build a model school demonstrating how public schools can better serve children who are traditionally written off by the system. "We were sick and tired of being sick and tired of the underachievement that was occurring in the public school system," explains one of the school's founders. "We decided that we would try to do something on a grander scale to turn that around."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Leadership and academic training
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 6-12 in 2003
Length of School Year	204 days
Length of School Day	8:00-4:00
School Meetings	Daily
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	No in-school library
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

New Leadership Charter School

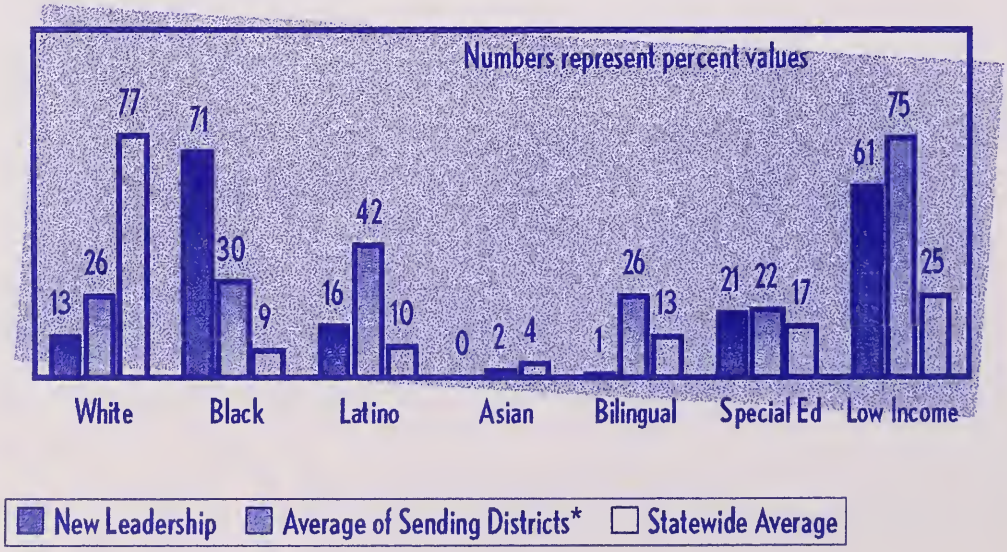
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students at about the same level as their district counterparts in Math and Science & Technology and six points higher in English Language Arts.

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

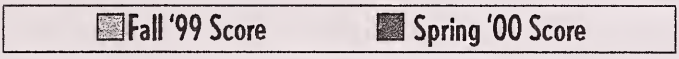


All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

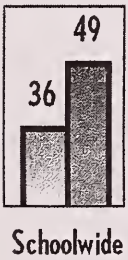
Academic Progress (Schoolwide ITBS Scores)

Math, Students at or above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00

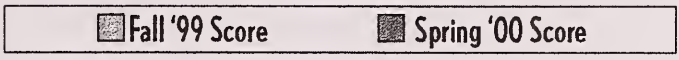
The graph at left shows the percentage of students at or above grade level on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills math section. In the fall, 33 percent of students were at or above grade level. By the end of the school year, this had increased to 44 percent.



Reading, Students at or above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



The graph at left shows the percentage of students at or above grade level on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills reading section. In the fall, 36 percent of students were at or above grade level. By the end of the school year, this had increased to 49 percent.



* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1996

Opened	1996
Location	Hadley (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	9-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	281
Waiting List, 1999-2000	50
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.6
In-District Transfer Rate	6.8%

School Leaders: Robert Brick and Luba Marsh
135 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035
Tel: 413 585 0003 Fax: 413 585 8399 E-mail: kentbrck@aol.com
http://pvpa.com

Mission. The mission of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School is to provide the Pioneer Valley with a high school for the performing arts, offering students an excellent academic program and access to diverse, creative performing programs and resources.

Description. In 1999-2000, Pioneer Valley completed its first year as a full four-grade high school with students from over fifty cities and towns in Western Massachusetts. These students received a standards-based, college-preparatory education unique in its focus on the performing arts. Every student at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts is responsible for meeting teacher-set standards in performing arts, language arts, world language, science, social science, and performing arts classes. Classes in the academic subject areas are offered in the first part of the school day and include individualized and advanced placement (AP) courses to meet specific student interests and needs.

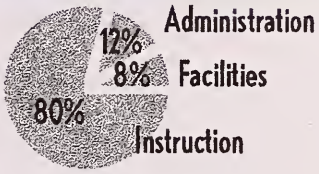
Through a host of community partnerships, Pioneer Valley offers a breadth of opportunities not only for its own students, but also for outside students, teachers, and community members who can take PVPA classes, participate in PVPA workshops, and enjoy PVPA performances.

Two hours at the end of each school day are set aside for studies in the performing arts. Pioneer Valley draws upon a variety of partnerships to provide a rich arts program to its students and to others outside the school. Students receive expert instruction and participate in internships with such organizations as Alvin Ailey Dance, Clearwater Productions Mime Troupe, and The Iron Horse Music Hall. In a partnership with Northampton Public Schools, PVPA offers classes to students at Northampton High School and Hadley High School. Through PVPA's summer institute, secondary school teachers from neighboring schools participate in curriculum development workshops to help them integrate arts into their curricula. In addition, PVPA's student music, dance, and theater performance groups have toured various high schools, colleges, and other venues throughout New England.

In 1999-2000, Pioneer Valley's first graduating class sent 79 percent of its students to college.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	9:1
Average Experience	10 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,089,887
Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,437
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,526



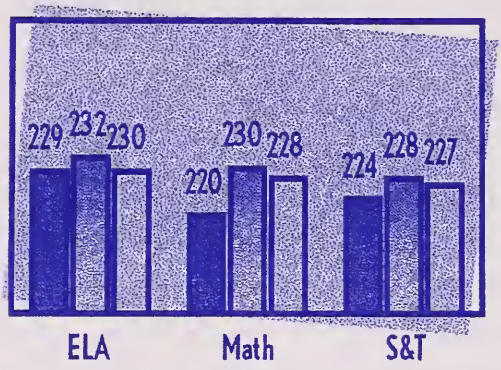
Origin. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School was started by the school's administrators, Ljuba Marsh and Bob Brick, along with a coalition of educators and artists. "We've dreamed of a school," said Brick, "that offers a balance of creative and critical thinking—an option that is sorely lacking in the Pioneer Valley and the public schools of Western Massachusetts."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Performing arts-based curriculum
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 9-12
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	M-Th 8:30-4:30; F 8:30-3:00
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	Access to local universities
Computers	10:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School

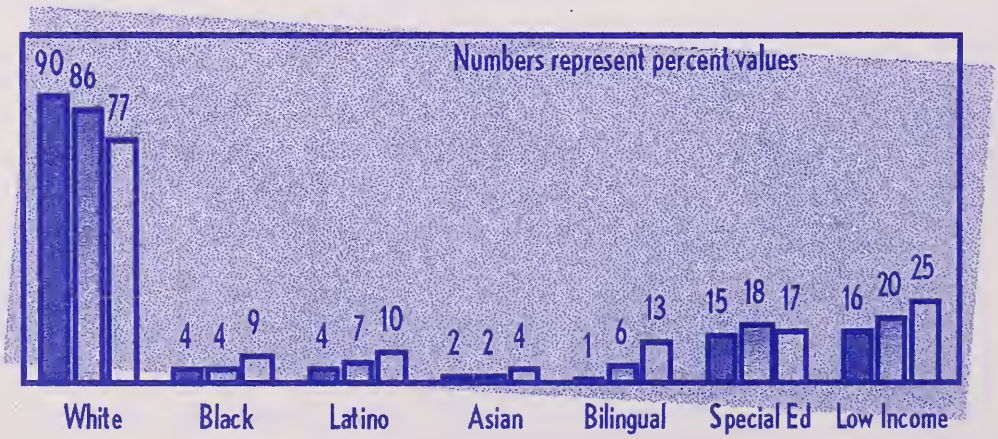
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students at Pioneer Valley scoring comparably to, or slightly below, their district counterparts in English Language Arts and Science & Technology, and ten points below in Math.

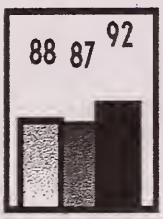
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

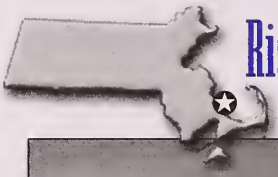
Academic Progress (Reported Schoolwide)

Percent of Students Receiving Course Credit, 1998 to 2000



The graph at left illustrates the percentage of courses for which students received credit–a grade of "B" or higher– in 1998, 1999, and 2000. The number increased from 87 to 88 percent in the first two years to nearly 92 percent in 2000.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.



Rising Tide Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Plymouth
Grades Served, 1999-2000	5-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	216
Waiting List, 1999-2000	71
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.8
In-District Transfer Rate	21.3%

School Leader: Jill Crafts
6 Resnik, Plymouth, MA Road
Tel: 508 747 2620 Fax: 508 830 9441 E-mail: jcrafts@risingtide.org
http://risingtide.org

Mission. Rising Tide aims to provide rigorous training as well as a sense of social and historical understanding, using a strong academic program rooted in the history of Plymouth, Massachusetts; to foster use of the practice of language, the reasoning of mathematics, the analysis of science, and the reflection of history; to cultivate within students a sense of belonging to their community, and of a tie with those who have come before them and those who will follow them; to graduate prepared young adults who have already sown within themselves a sense of place and belonging that will be the bounty of the future, whether they remain in the Plymouth area or venture from the harbor.

In the interdisciplinary spirit of Rising Tide, last year's eighth graders completed "Plymouth and Beyond: Centuries of Change," a project that drew together social studies, science, technology, and math to study local history.

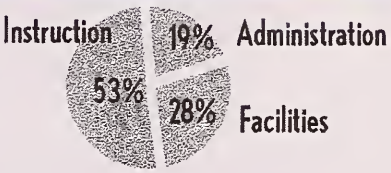
Description. Rising Tide combines skills training with an interdisciplinary and project-based approach to learning. It seeks to promote inquiry and graduate self-directed learners, investigators, communicators, and community stewards. These four conceptions form the basis for evaluation of students. For example, last year's eighth graders completed "Plymouth and

Beyond: Centuries of Change," a project that included a social studies unit on the Industrial Revolution, a science unit on forces and Newton's Laws, a technology lesson on design, and a math lesson on proportion.

Individual Education Compacts (IECs) reflect the school's commitment to maintaining standards while granting individual attention to each of its students. Conferences with students, parents, and advisors follow the creation of IECs three times each year.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	16:1
Average Experience	7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,951,230
Per Pupil Expenditures	$9,033
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,599



Plymouth is used as a resource at every grade level. Students learn curriculum, do projects, and take trips that increase their ties to their community. In the past these have included participation in an archeological dig, sailing off the coast of Plymouth, and visits to local cranberry bogs. Community awareness is further fostered through a mentoring program that pairs students with members of the community. Rising Tide also established a Community Service Board comprised of students who organize service projects. Through this effort, students began a recycling program for the school in the 2000-2001 academic year.

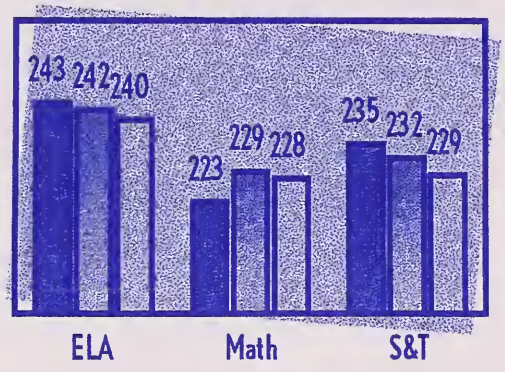
Origin. Rising Tide Charter School was founded by a group of parents in Plymouth who wanted to develop a school in which parental involvement would be central to operations. "As parents, we care about our kids and we care about what they're doing in school," explains one founder. "We wanted to create a school that was attentive to our children's needs and our needs as parents."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Community-oriented, project-based
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades 5-8
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	7:40-2:40
School Meetings	Twice weekly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	200 volumes and CD tower
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Beacon Educational Management

Rising Tide Charter School

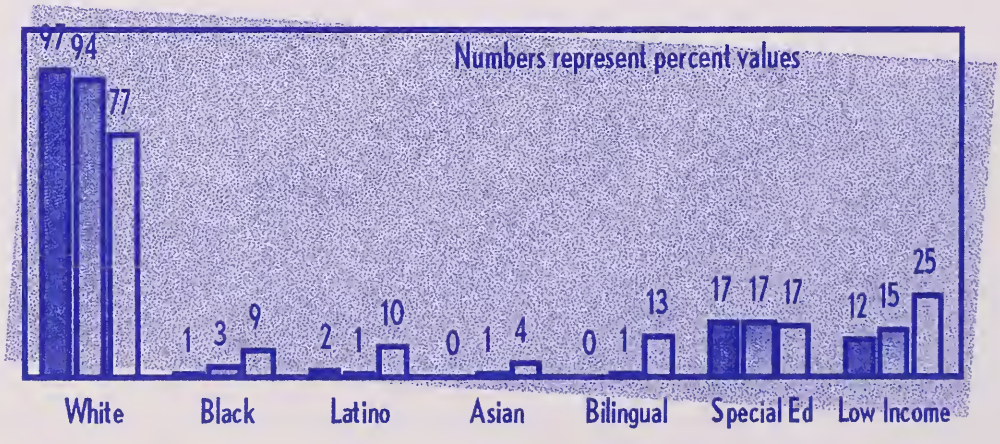
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students performing at similar levels as their district counterparts in English/Language Arts and Science & Technology and six points below students from the surrounding districts in Math.

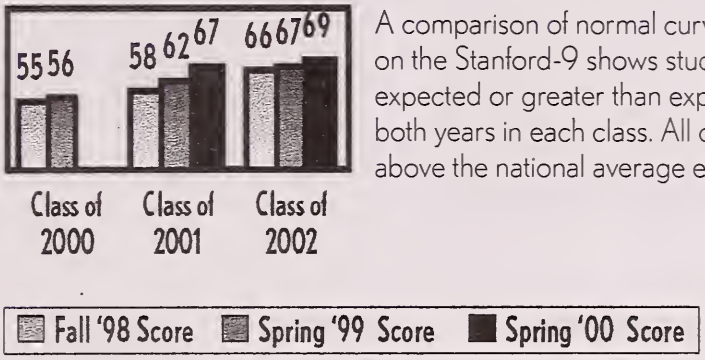
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Overall, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making expected or greater than expected progress both years in each class. All classes scored above the national average each year.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

River Valley Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1999

Opened	1999
Location	Newburyport (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	1-5
Enrollment, 1999-2000	160
Waiting List, 1999-2000	51
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.3
In-District Transfer Rate	5.0%

School Leader: Gordon Maas
Two Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950
Tel: 978 465 0065 Fax: 978 465 0119
http://www.rivervalleycharter.org

Mission. River Valley aims to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem-solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life.

Description. River Valley is the first Montessori charter school in Massachusetts, and one of the first Montessori schools in the United States to be founded as a charter. As one of more than 200 Montessori public schools in the United States, River Valley seeks to combine the Montessori method with the egalitarian ideals of public education—that is, Montessori that is measurable, accountable, and accessible to all children. The Montessori philosophy calls for multi-age classrooms; long work periods; uniquely structured classroom design; subjects that are taught thematically across disciplines; materials that focus on many levels of under-

River Valley is the first Montessori charter school in Massachusetts, and one of the first Montessori schools in the United States to be founded as a charter school.

standing; and teaching that emphasizes understanding and application of knowledge, skills, and concepts.

The school uses criteria for student assessment that combine the Massachusetts MCAS Frameworks with the Montessori scope and sequence. In addition to assessing portfolios which each student maintains, teachers monitor their students' social and emotional development as part of their daily observations, evaluating students' attitude toward school; inner security, sense of order; pride in the environment; abiding curiosity; habits of concentration; habits of initiative and persistence; ability to make decisions; sense of integrity, self-confidence; self-discipline; and sense of responsibility to other members of the school community.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	10:1
Average Experience	17.7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,433,529
Per Pupil Expenditure	$8,960
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,494

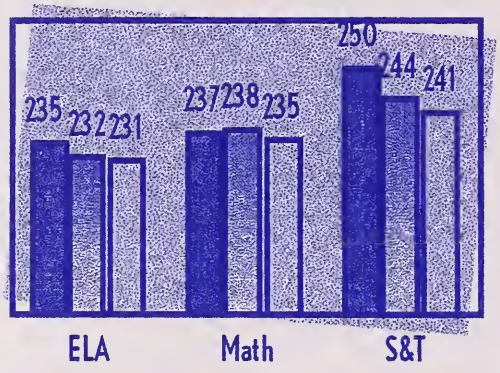
Origin. River Valley Charter School was founded by a group of parents and educators strongly committed to both the Montessori philosophy and public education. "We had observed Montessori education in a variety of private venues and had also seen bits and pieces of the method making their way into local public classrooms," explains one of the school's founders. "We knew, however, that Montessori methods are most powerful when implemented as a complete system and saw the potential to 'make Montessori public' with a new charter school that would both start from the ground up and be equally accessible to everyone in our region." After more than a year of research and proposal development, the school was granted its charter in January of 1999.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Montessori, interdisciplinary learning
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 1-8 in 2002
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:30-3:00
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	2,000 volumes
Computers	5:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

River Valley Charter School

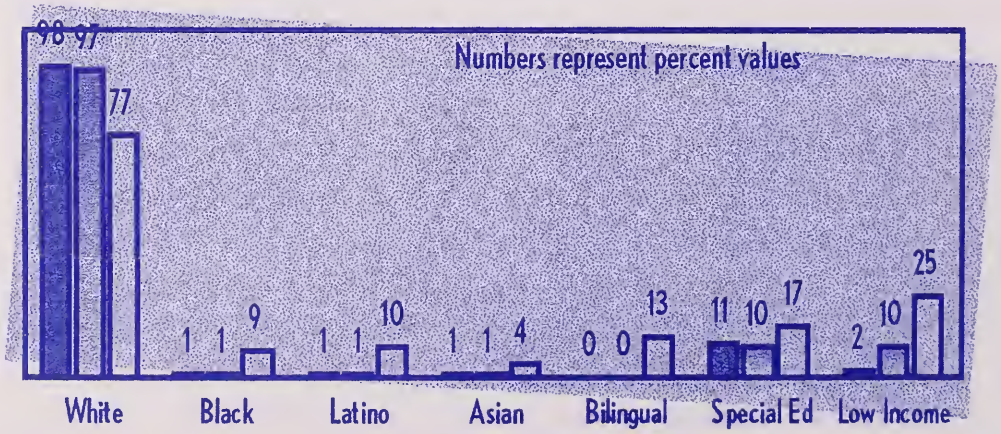
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students scoring comparably to their counterparts in the surrounding districts in English Language Arts and Math, and scoring six points higher than their counterparts in Science & Technology.

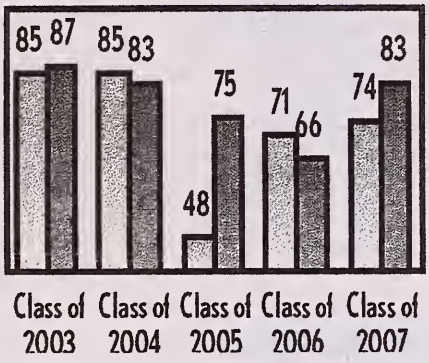
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

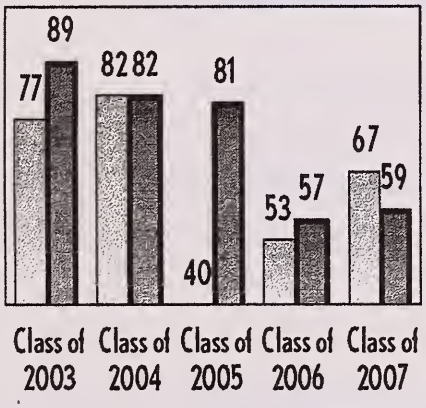
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, Terra Nova Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



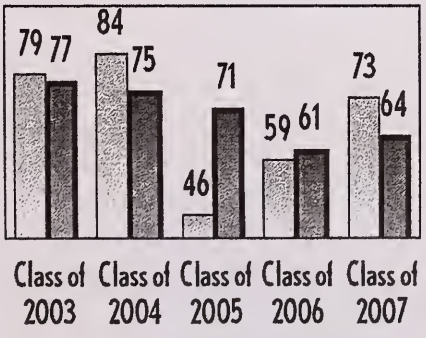
A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Terra Nova shows students making greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2005 and 2007, expected progress in the classes of 2003 and 2004, and less than expected progress in the Class of 2006. All classes scored above the national average in 2000.

Language, Terra Nova Percentile Scores, 1999 to 2000



A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Terra Nova shows students making greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2003 and 2005, expected progress in the classes of 2003 and 2004, and less than normal in the Class of 2006. All classes scored above the national average in 2000.

Math, Terra Nova Percentile Scores,1999 to 2000



A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Terra Nova shows students making greater than expected progress in the Class of 2005 and expected progress in the Classes of 2003 and 2006. Other classes show less than expected progress. All classes scored above the national average in 2000.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1999

Opened	1999
Location	Springfield
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-5
Enrollment, 1999-2000	142
Waiting List, 1999-2000	12
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.1
In-District Transfer Rate	12.7%

School Leader: English Bradshaw
570 Cottage Street, Springfield, MA 01104
Tel: 413 747 5200 Fax: 413 747 4528

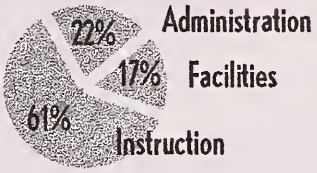
Mission. The mission of the Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School is to provide urban students in Springfield, Massachusetts, the opportunity to achieve academic and personal excellence when offered an intellectually challenging curriculum and a supportive environment. These two key elements combine to foster the development of the love of learning, moral character and social responsibility. We believe that all children will learn when those responsible for the education of our children communicate to them the clear expectation that they can learn. We believe, therefore, that the success of our students rests on the establishment of and adherence to high expectations and a commitment to rigorous standards of achievement and accountability for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Our students will graduate from the RMHACS armed with the tools they need to meet the world on its own terms and the ambition and capacity to become leaders in society.

Every student at Robert M. Hughes is expected to memorize the school's creed, a set of 18 personal statements about success, failure, courage, and each person's place in society.

Description. The Robert M. Hughes Academy uses the Marva Collins teaching method to foster student personal and academic growth. This is a "back-to-the-basics" curriculum that focuses on children learning sequentially so that mastery of basic skills precedes higher level learning. The curriculum is built around classical literature and poetry and the learning of facts and values through drilling, memorization, and recitation. Student learning is showcased at all-school assemblies held every Friday.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	16:1
Average Experience	3.5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,203,840
Per Pupil Expenditures	$8,478
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$5,886



To promote personal growth, students are expected to memorize and put into practice the school's "Creed," which is incorporated into class work and is comprised of 18 aphorisms such as, "Society will draw a circle that shuts me out, but my superior thoughts will draw me in," and, "I can either be hesitant or courageous. Life does indeed maroon the hesitant and inspire the brave."

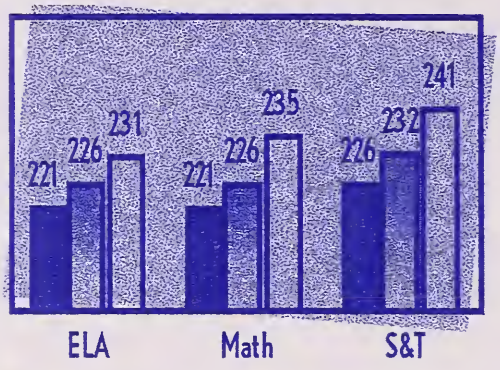
Origin. The development of Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School was inspired and sponsored by Northern Educational Service, a community organization founded in 1963 by the late Robert M. Hughes, whose mission was to provide educational support services that addressed the needs of inner-city youth. The school's founding coalition consisted of community leaders and parents. "We were concerned about the quality of the public schools," they explain, "and the capacity of urban education to serve the broad and diverse population of children in our cities."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Marva Collins, Back to Basics
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades K-8 in 2002
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:30
School Meetings	Every Friday
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	No library in school
Computers	10:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Robert M. Hughes Academy Charter School

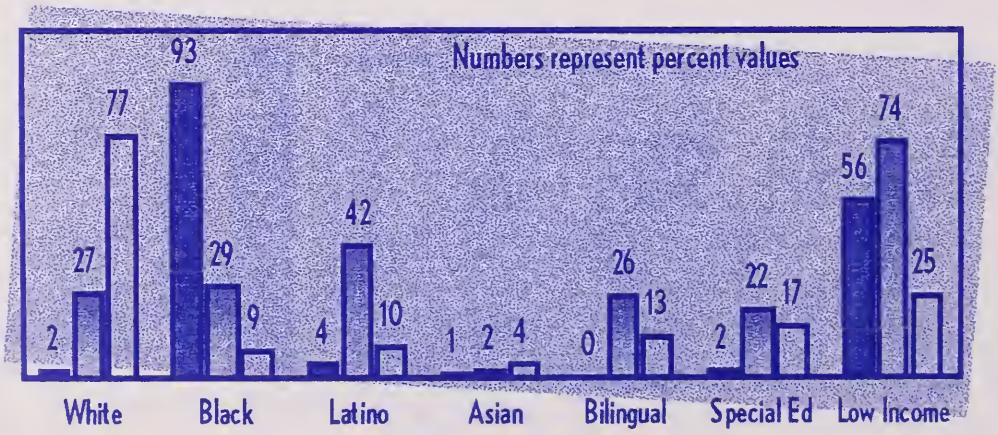
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores five to six points behind their district counterparts in each subject area.

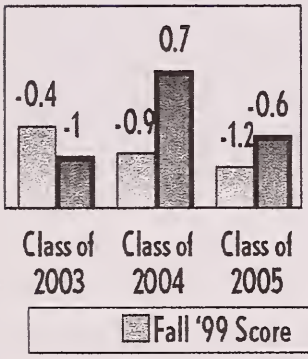
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

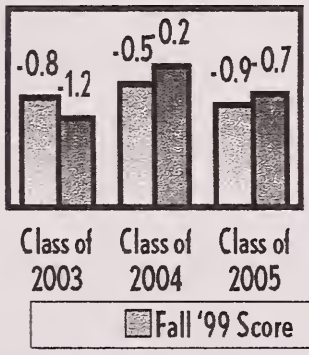
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Math, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



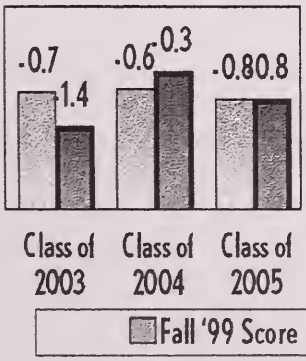
The graph at left compares each class's grade level equivalent with respect to the norm on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Students in the Class of 2004 began the year nine months behind and ended the year seven months ahead of grade level. Students in the Class of 2005 progressed from being one year and two months below grade level at the beginning of the year to just six months behind at the end of the year.

Reading, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



The graph at left compares each class's grade level equivalent with respect to the norm on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Students in the Class of 2005 began the year nine months behind and ended the year only seven months behind. Similarly, students in the Class of 2004 progressed from being five months behind at the beginning of the year to two months behind at the end of the year.

Language, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



The graph at left compares each class's grade level equivalent with respect to the norm on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Students in the Class of 2004 began the year six months behind and ended the year only three months behind. Students in the Class of 2005 began and ended the year eight months behind.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1999
Location	Roxbury
Grade Served, 1999-2000	6
Enrollment, 1999-2000	80
Waiting List, 1999-2000	35
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.8
In-District Transfer Rate	18.8%

School Leaders: John King and Evan Rudall
120 Fisher Avenue; Roxbury, MA 02120
Tel: 617 566 2361 Fax: 617 566 2373 E-mail: office@roxburyprep.org
http://www.roxburyprep.org

Mission. Roxbury Preparatory Charter School prepares its students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Roxbury Prep is founded on the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs when: 1) the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and well-planned; 2) the school emphasizes student character, community, responsibility, and exposure to life's possibilities; and 3) a community network supports students' academic, social, and physical well-being. Roxbury Prep helps students gain admission to outstanding public and private college preparatory high schools.

Description. The cornerstone of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School's program is its rigorous curriculum and its focus on reading, writing, speaking, and math skills. Based on Advanced Placement programs and the most demanding and successful college preparatory programs in the country, Roxbury Prep's curriculum is refined regularly by teachers. From conducting experiments with electricity and magnets to writing four-paragraph essays, Roxbury Prep students are challenged continuously to think critically and apply their knowl-

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School's curriculum is based on the most demanding and successful college preparatory programs in the country and refined regularly by teachers.

edge. To prepare its students for success in college and beyond, the school emphasizes the following ten core values: scholarship; integrity; dignity; responsibility; perseverance; community; leadership; peace; social justice; and investment.

In order to encourage student achievement through reflective teaching, teachers are organized in Critical Friends Groups. During the summer and school year, the teachers share their own work and analyze student work to consider teacher efficacy, evidence of student learning, and achievement of goals.

Roxbury Prep relies on a vast array of community resources and organizations to provide students with sufficient structure and support. The school keeps families involved and well-informed through an orientation, Family Nights, parent/teacher conferences, newsletters, frequent academic progress reports, a Homework Hotline, evening programs, and the Parent Involvement Committee.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	5 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,097,938
Per Pupil Expenditures	$13,724
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,646

Origin. Roxbury Preparatory Charter School was founded in 1997 by a group of experienced educators, parents, and community leaders. Roxbury Prep's founders opened the school to address the dearth of college preparatory programs in Roxbury and to model the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs.

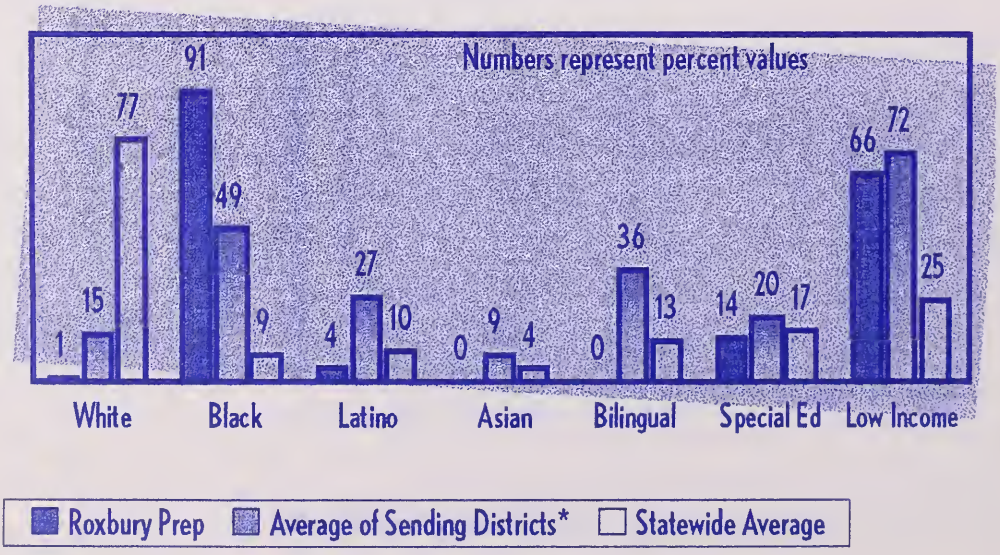
School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Structured, traditional instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 6-8 in 2001
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	7:45-4:15, Fridays 7:45-1:45
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	No library in school
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-00)

Since Roxbury Preparatory Charter School does not currently enroll any fourth, eighth, or tenth graders, it has no students taking the MCAS exam.

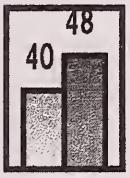
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Math, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores,Fall '99 to Spring '00

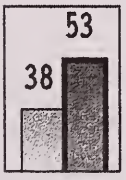


A comparison of national individual percentile rank on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress.

Reading, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00

A comparison of national individual percentile rank on the Stanford-9 shows students making expected progress.

Language, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00



A comparison of national individual percentile rank on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress, and ending the year above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Sabis Foxborough Regional Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Foxborough (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-10
Enrollment, 1999-2000	690
Waiting List, 1999-2000	1349
Application Rate, 1999-2000	26.9
In-District Transfer Rate	5.9%

School Leader: Bill Schwartz
131 Central Street, Foxborough, MA 02035
Tel: 508 543 2508 Fax: 508 543 7982 E-mail: sfrcs@sfrcs-sabis.net
http://www.sabis.net

Mission. The Sabis Foxborough Regional Charter School will be recognized as a provider of top quality education to a highly diverse student body. It will prepare all students for success in college, equip them with the ability and desire for life-long learning, and strengthen their civic, ethical, and moral values. The school will maintain high standards of efficiency and accountability throughout its operation.

Description. Sabis Foxborough Regional Charter School bases its curriculum on the Sabis Education System, which emphasizes a highly structured, internationally oriented curriculum in the core subjects of English, math, science, and world languages, designed to prepare all students for college study. Each subject is broken down into subsubjects, which in turn are broken down into "essential concepts" which all students must master. Students who are significantly behind in English or mathematics are placed in intensive program classes where they receive twice the instructional time of regular classes in order to catch up and rejoin their peers. Student

Sabis Foxborough's Student Life Overview Organization provides opportunities for students to be involved in the school's leadership, working alongside administrative and academic staff.

progress is measured with weekly tests, assessment tests given twice a term, and final exams given at the end of each term.

Within the school community, the Sabis philosophy emphasizes high standards of student conduct, broad participation in extracurricular activities, and engagement in community service. The school's Student Life Overview Organization provides opportunities for students to be involved in the school's leadership, working alongside administrative and academic staff. Student Prefects are involved in peer tutoring, peer mediation, development of the school's sports program and school events, and various other activities. All students are expected to develop a sense of tolerance, cooperation, guidance, teamwork, and understanding of people throughout the world.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	12:1
Average Experience	5.6 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$4,244,973
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,152
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$5,554

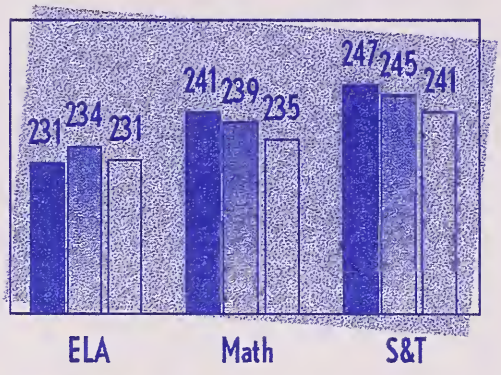
Origin. The Sabis Foxborough Charter School was started by a group of parents whose interest in providing greater school choice in their community had been piqued following the founding of nearby Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School. After considering various management companies, they found that their philosophy meshed with that of Sabis Educational Systems, Inc. Working with Sabis, the group applied for a charter in hopes of developing a school that would help students become responsible, well-rounded, lifelong learners, able to succeed in top-tier colleges.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Highly structured instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades K-12 in 2002
Length of School Year	182 days
Length of School Day	8:15-3:20
School Meetings	No regular meetings of student body
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	1,255 volumes
Computers	23:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

Sabis Foxborough Regional Charter School

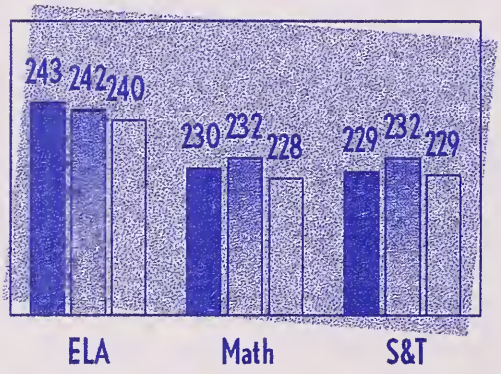
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



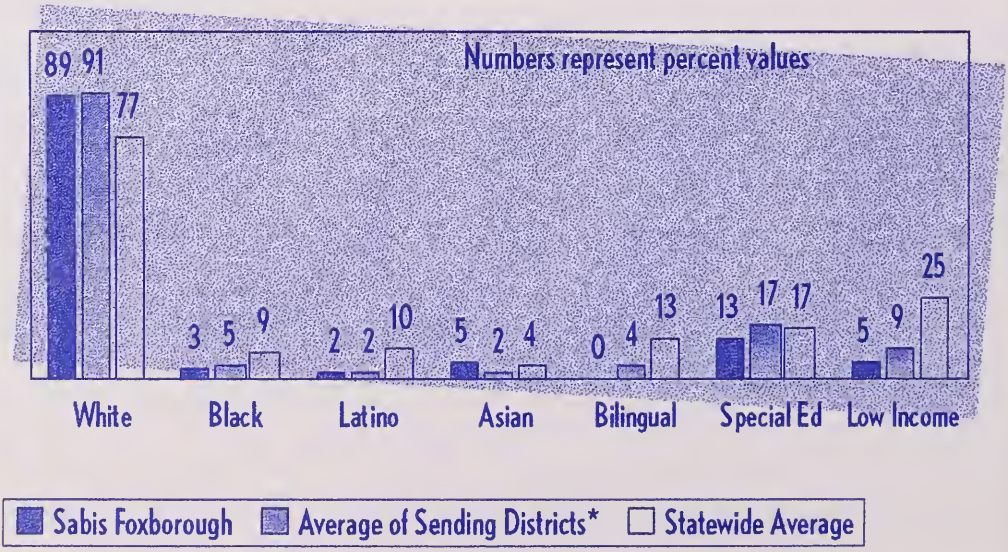
A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in every subject area.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students with scores similar to those of their district counterparts in every subject area.

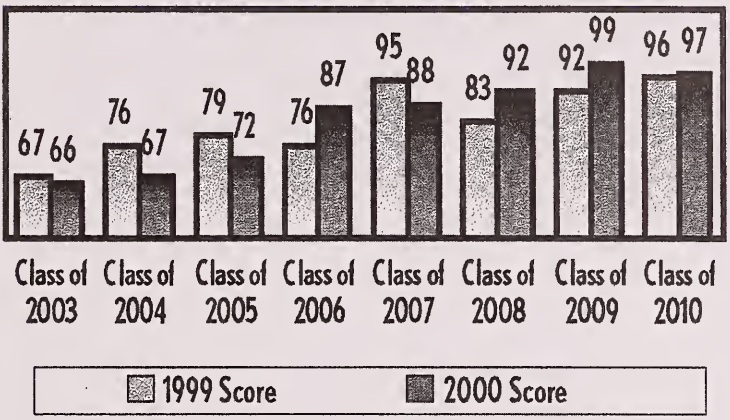
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

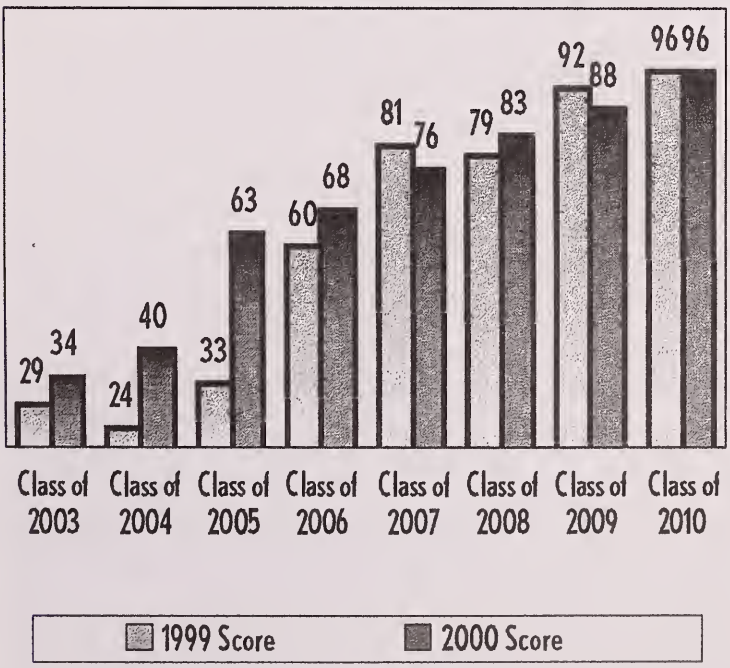
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

English, Percent of Students Achieving Mastery, 1999 to 2000



The graph at left shows the the percentage of students achieving mastery in the core subject of English, an internal measure used by Sabis Foxborough. The number of students achieving mastery increased in three of the school's eight classes; remained relatively constant in two of the school's classes; and decreased in three of the school's classes.

Math, Percent of Students Achieving Mastery, 1999 to 2000



The graph at left shows the the percentage of students achieving mastery in the core subject of math, an internal measure used by Sabis Foxborough. The number of students achieving mastery increased in five of the school's eight classes; remained relatively constant in two of the school's classes; and decreased in one of the school's classes.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Sabis International Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Springfield
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-11
Enrollment, 1999-2000	1138
Waiting List, 1999-2000	1150
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.6
In-District Transfer Rate	2.2%

School Leader: Maretta Thomsen
160 Joan Street, Springfield, MA
Tel: 413 783 2600 Fax: 413 783 2555 E-mail: sicsma@sabis.net
http://www.sabis.net

Mission. It is our goal to give all of our students a rewarding school experience both academically and socially. We will continue to listen and learn as we grow in order to provide all that we can to enrich their lives and to ensure acceptance into the college of their dreams. We will continue to strive for excellence in education and provide a fulfilling education that meets the needs of students and families.

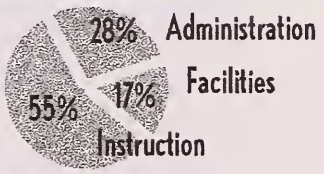
Description. The Sabis Education System emphasizes a highly structured, internationally oriented curriculum in the core subjects of English, math, science, and world languages, designed to prepare all students for college study. Each subject is broken down into sub-subjects, which in turn are broken down into "essential concepts" which all students must master. Student progress is measured with weekly tests, assessment tests given twice a term, and final exams given at the end of each term. Students who are significantly behind in English or mathematics are placed in intensive program classes where they receive twice the instructional time of regular

In 1999-2000, Sabis International students were the recipients of a variety of awards, including the Medgar Evers Youth Leadership Award, Ventures Scholarship Awards, National Merit Scholarship recognition, and Model Congress awards.

classes in order to catch up and rejoin their peers. This includes immersion language courses for students who enter the school with limited English proficiency. Students who are significantly ahead in an area are offered enrichment classes with other students at their level.

Within the school community, the Sabis philosophy emphasizes high standards of student conduct, participation in extracurricular activities, and community service. The school's Student Life Overview Organization provides opportunities for students to be involved in the school's leadership, working alongside administrative and academic staff. Student Prefects are involved in peer tutoring, peer mediation, development of the school's sports program and school events, and various other activities. All students are expected to develop a sense of tolerance, cooperation, guidance, teamwork, and understanding of people throughout the world. Students are recognized monthly for good behavior with a "gold slip" luncheon and gift certificates that are redeemable at local stores and restaurants. Students are also paired with staff members in one-to-one mentoring relationship with the goal of increasing the student's self-esteem.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	13:1
Average Experience	5.3 years
Teacher Turnover	19%
Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$8,809,700
Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,741
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,043



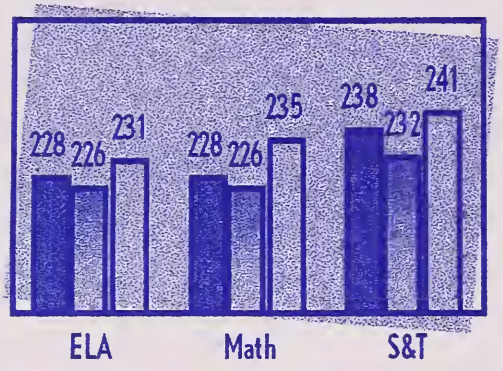
Origin. Springfield Public Schools superintendent Peter Negroni, the city's mayor, several members of the school committee, and parents invited Sabis Educational Systems, Inc. to forge a public/private partnership to create, in Superintendent Negroni's words, "a top-notch, results-oriented school that will set the tone for greater student achievement in other Springfield Public Schools."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Highly structured instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Serving grades K-12 in 2000
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	K-7 8:15-3:15; grades 8-11 7:20-2:35
School Meetings	No regular meetings
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	5,000 volumes
Computers	11:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

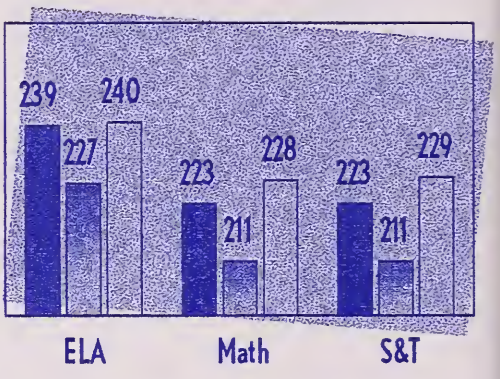
Sabis International Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

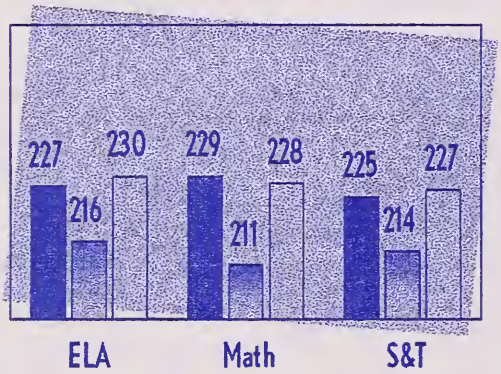
Grade 4



Grade 8

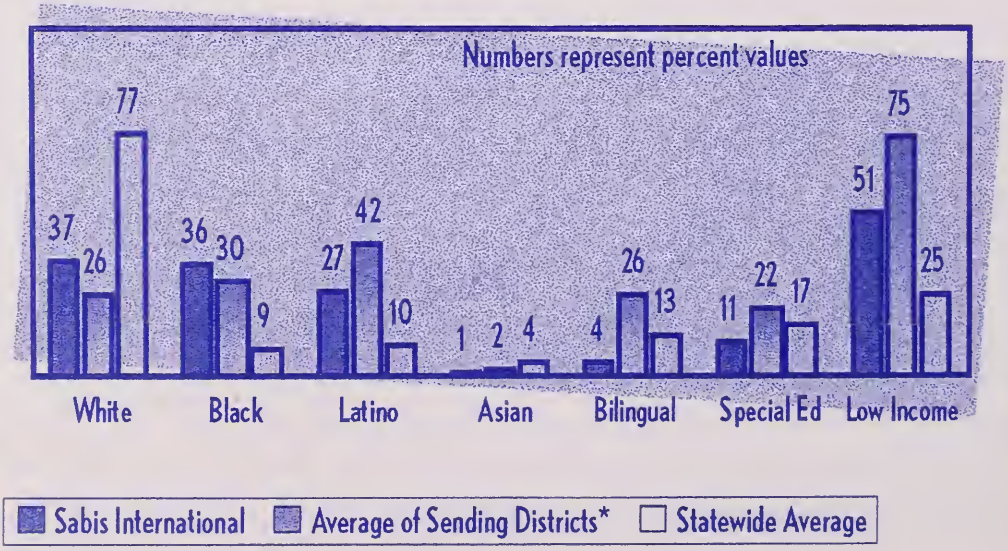


Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows a growing disparity between the scores of Sabis International students and their counterparts in the surrounding district. Scores start two to six points better than their district counterparts in fourth grade; twelve points better in eighth grade, and eleven to eighteen points better by tenth grade.

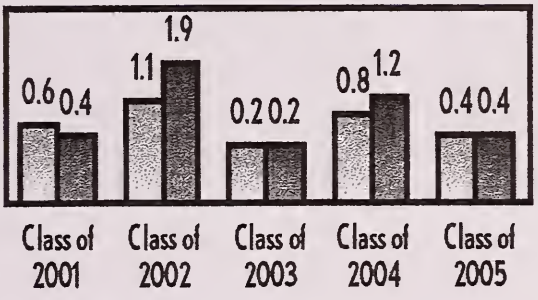
Student Demographics (1999-2000)

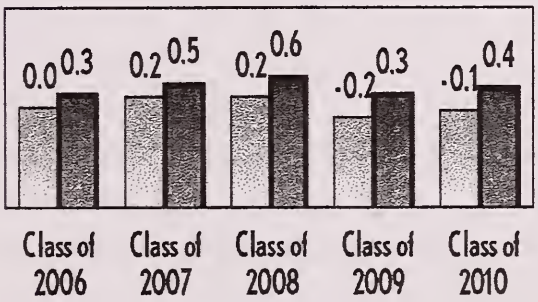


All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Years Above Grade Level, ITBS Scores, Fall '99 to Spring '00





The graphs above show each class's grade level equivalent based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, expressed as that class's number of years above grade level. For instance, the Class of 2001 was 0.6 school years (6 months) above grade level in the Fall of 1999 and 4 months above in the Spring of 2000. This comparison shows greater than expected progress in half of the school's classes, led by the Class of 2002 which posted eight months more growth than would be expected. The Classes of 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007 showed expected growth and the class of 2001 was the only to show less than normal growth, with students starting the year six months ahead of their peers and ending the year four months ahead.

Fall '99 Score Spring '00 Score

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Seven Hills Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1996
Location	Worcester
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	663
Waiting List, 1999-2000	191
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.3
In-District Transfer Rate	5.4%

School Leader: Robert Martin
51 Gage Street, Worcester, MA 01605
Tel: 508 779 7500 Fax: 508 753 7318 E-mail: sevenhills@edisonproject.com
http://www.edisonschools.com

Mission. Seven Hills Charter School is committed to preparing a diverse cross section of Worcester children for success as students, workers, and citizens by providing a high quality education at prevailing public school costs.

Description. Seven Hills uses research-based models designed to provide a high quality, well rounded education in seven areas: reading and language arts, history and the social sciences, the arts, mathematics and science, character and ethics education, health and physical education, and practical arts and skills. Through a combination of cooperative and project-based learning, and individual, small group, and large group instruction, students are taught to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and decide based on their own experience and research.

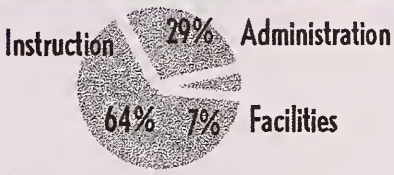
Combining technology, research, history, and art, students created hyperstudio renditions of works by their favorite artists along with papier-mâché busts of the artists.

The school's academic program uses a variety of research-based models such as Success for All and Chicago Math. All students learn a world language as part of their education. The school curriculum also provides heavy emphasis on the arts, which are seen as a vital part of the school community. All students participate in

classes in music, drama, and the visual arts. Students learn singing, music history, instruments, playwriting, directing, lighting, costume design, and other skills that help them to put on productions including a musical rendition of the history of Worcester and a Shakespeare play performed every year by the eighth grade. In 1999-2000, students combined technology, research, history, and art, students to create hyperstudio renditions of works by their favorite artists along with papier-mâché busts of the artists.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	13:1
Average Experience	5.8 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$4,097,534
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,180
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,307



The school also emphasizes eight "core values" in a program of character education integrated into the curriculum. Staff seek to teach, reinforce, and reward behaviors that reflect these values of wisdom, justice, courage, compassion, hope, respect, responsibility, and integrity.

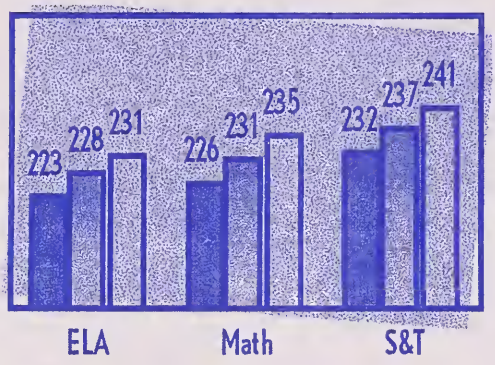
Origin. Seven Hills Charter School is the product of a partnership between a group of Worcester's business, community, and education leaders and the Edison Project. "Edison's vision for public education is one that we wanted to bring to Worcester," says a businessman who helped found the school.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Research-based educational programs
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-8
Length of School Year	200 days
Length of School Day	7:30-3:10
School Meetings	Two per year
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	7,500 volumes
Computers	3:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Edison Schools, Inc.

Seven Hills Charter School

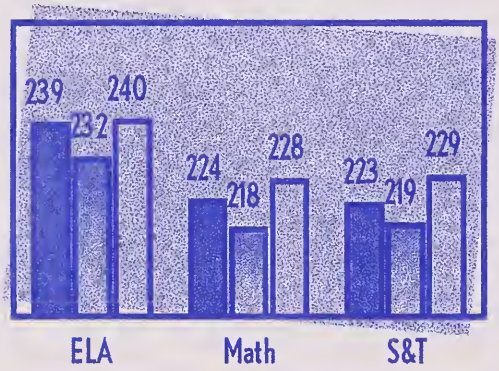
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 4



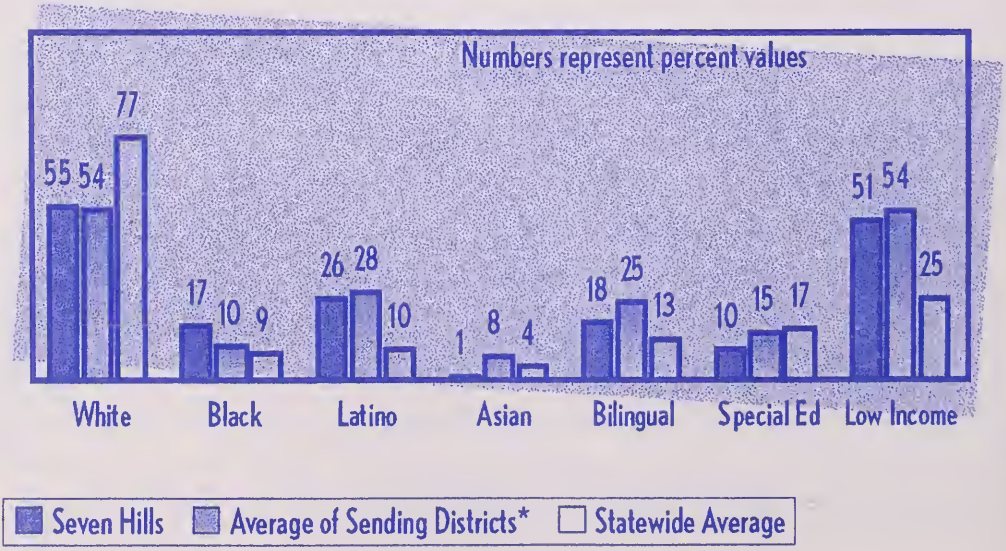
A comparison of MCAS scores in the fourth grade shows students being outperformed by students in the surrounding districts by five points in each subject area.

Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores in the eighth grade shows students outperforming their district counterparts by four to seven points in each subject area.

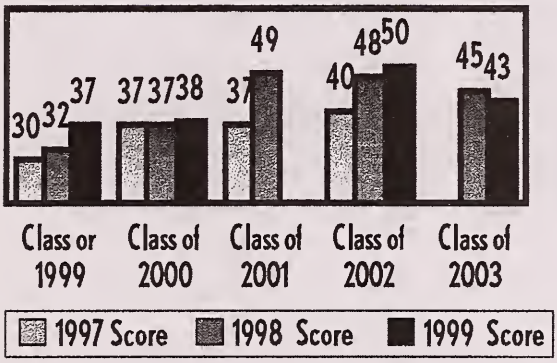
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

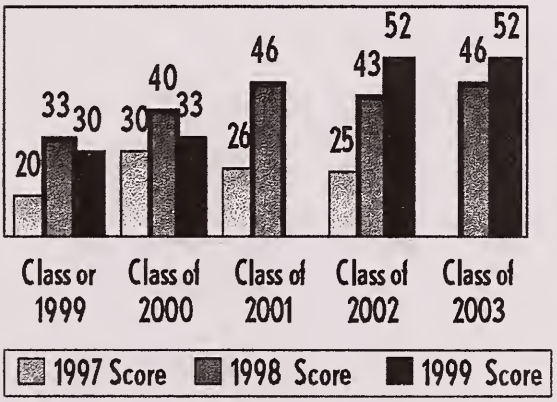
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Reading, MAT/Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1997 through 1999



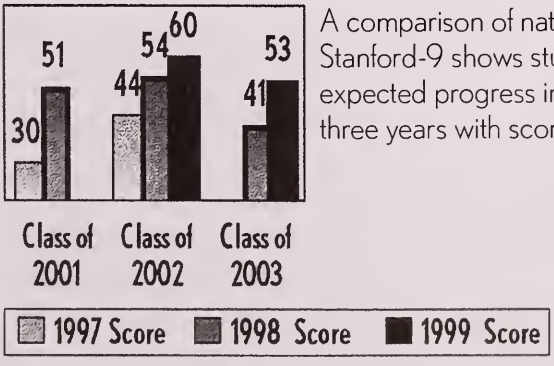
A two-year comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (for Classes of 1999 and 2000) and the Stanford-9 (for other classes) shows students making greater than expected progress in every year except the Class of 2000, which made expected progress, and the Class of 2003.

Math, MAT/Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1997 through 1999



A two-year comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (for Classes of 1999 and 2000) and the Stanford-9 (for other classes) shows students making greater than expected progress in every year except the Class of 2000, which made expected progress. Two classes ended the three years with scores above the national average.

Language, Stanford-9 Percentile Scores, 1997 through 1999



A comparison of national percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making much greater than expected progress in every class. All classes ended the three years with scores above the national average.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Somerville Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1996

Opened	1996
Location	Somerville
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-11
Enrollment, 1999-2000	688
Waiting List, 1999-2000	174
Application Rate, 1999-2000	3.0
In-District Transfer Rate	2.9%

School Leader: George Saad
15 Webster Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
Tel: 617 629 5800 Fax: 617 629 0130 E-mail: scsma@sabis.net
http://www.sabis.net

Mission. The mission of the Somerville Charter School is to prepare each student for success in college, to inspire a lifelong love of learning and to foster responsible citizenship.

Description. The Sabis Education System emphasizes a highly structured, internationally oriented curriculum in the core subjects of English, math, science, and Spanish, designed to prepare all students for college study. Students are also taught art and computers at least once a week. Each subject is broken down into sub-subjects, which in turn are broken down into "essential concepts" which all students must master. Students who are significantly behind in English or mathematics are placed in intensive program classes where they receive twice the instructional time of regular classes in order to catch up and rejoin their peers. Student progress is measured with weekly tests, assessment tests given twice a term, and final exams given at the end of each term.

The school offers 20 after-school Charter Clubs and an after-school sports program. Other after-school activities include a student newspaper, Girl Scouts, computer lab, and an Extended Day Program.

Within the school community, the SABIS philosophy emphasizes high standards of student conduct, broad participation in extracurricular activi-

ties, and regular engagement in community service. The school's Student Life Organization sponsors activities to support peer tutoring, a student newsletter, literary journal, cultural awareness, and environmental awareness. The school offers twenty after-school Charter Clubs and an after-school sports program. Other after-school activities include a student newspaper, Girl Scouts, computer lab, and an Extended Day Program.

Strong emphasis is placed on the development of a sense of community within the school. Students in the Upper School provided tutoring for more than 80 of their younger peers. Students receive "gold slips" for exemplary behavior, with approximately 2,300 slips given out in the 1999-2000 school year. Students also participate in an Advising course in which they consider ethical, moral, and civic values in their own lives.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	9:1
Average Experience	9 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$5,907,320
Per Pupil Expenditures	$8,465
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$7,803

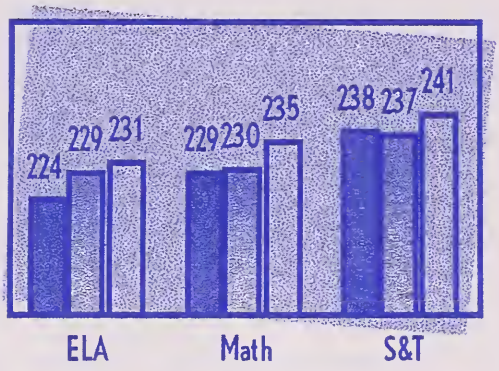
Origin. The Somerville Charter School was founded by a diverse group of parents united by a common vision for academically rigorous education. These parents, who met through their reform efforts within the public system in Somerville, enlisted the expertise of Sabis Educational Systems to assist them in the academic and administrative management of the charter school. As one of the school's founding board members recalls, "We were motivated by a vision of a school where children are challenged to do things they never thought they could, a place where children develop authentic self-confidence, based upon measurable accomplishment and hard work."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Highly structured instruction
Size at Full Capacity	Serving grades K-12 in 2000
Length of School Year	182 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:00
School Meetings	Monthly
Student Dress Code	Dress code
Library	No library in school
Computers	23:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

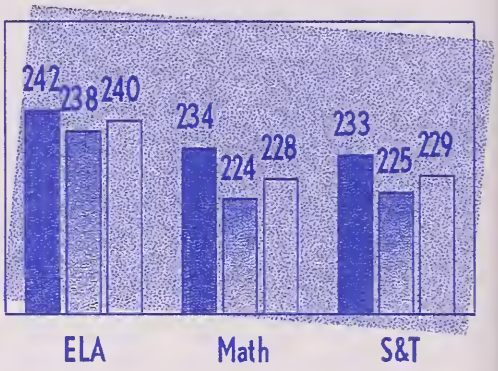
Somerville Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

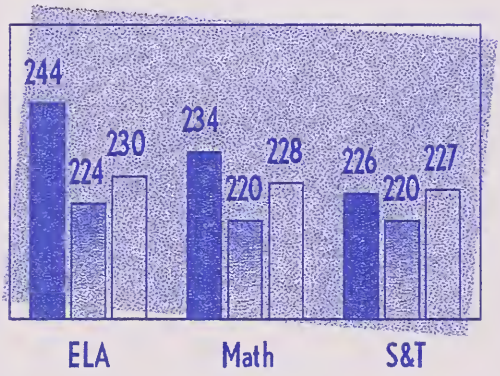
Grade 4



Grade 8

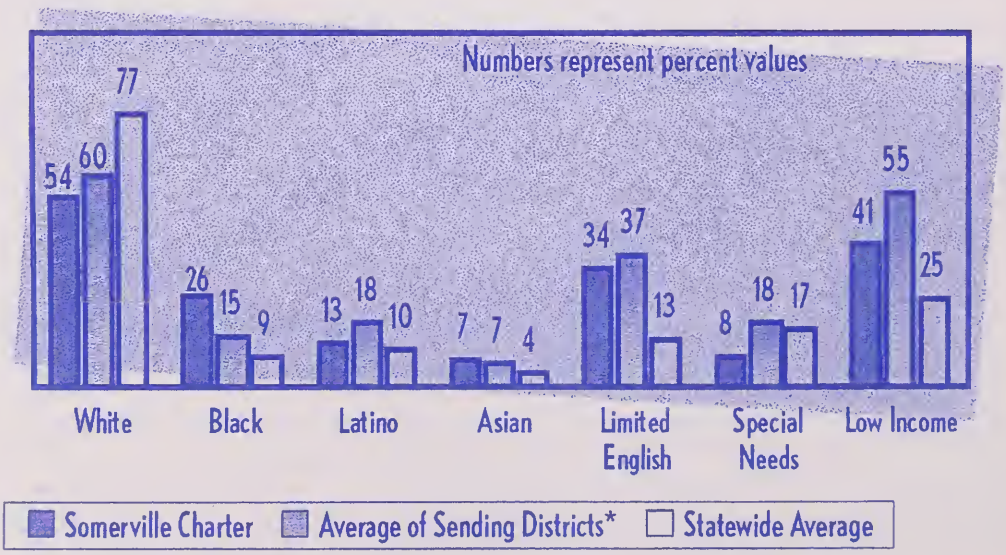


Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students initially even with, or lagging behind, their district counterparts in all subjects in fourth grade, but four to ten points ahead in every subject area in eighth grade, and six to twenty points ahead in tenth grade.

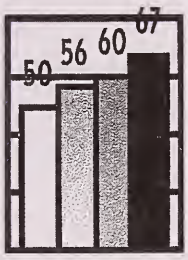
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Schoolwide Analysis)

Overall, CTBS Percentile Scores, 1996 through 1999



In 2000, the Somerville Charter School conducted a longitudinal cohort analysis of scores of the 145 students who had stayed in the school consistently for four years. This gives a true comparison of progress over those four years. Schoolwide normal percentile rank on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills increased from 50th percentile in 1996 to 67th percentile in 1999, reflecting progress much greater than expected and scores above the national average over the three intervening years.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 1999-2000	5-8
Enrollment, 1999-2000	160
Waiting List, 1999-2000	370
Application Rate, 1999-2000	6.6
In-District Transfer Rate	2.5%

School Leader: Brett Peiser
7 Elkins Street, Boston, MA 02127
Tel: 617 269 7557 Fax: 617 269 7553
http://www.sbha.org

Mission. The mission of South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School is to provide an academically rigorous, college-preparatory public education to students from the City of Boston, with an emphasis on math and science; to integrate into the school's educational program its Boston Harbor campus, drawing particularly upon the resources of the school's waterfront location and Greater Boston area; to create a thriving school community that makes students feel they are part of something larger than themselves and that encourages families to be proud and active partners with the school. The mission is also to develop in students qualities associated with strong character and many of the new, basic skills necessary in today's academic and professional world, and to instill in students a desire to pursue independent academic inquiry and a lifelong understanding of the value and importance of education.

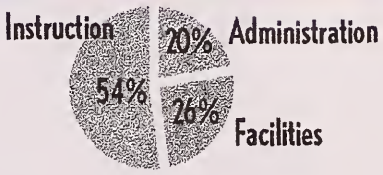
South Boston Harbor Academy is not only in high demand from parents, it is also in high demand from teachers. In 2000, the school received 800 applications for five new positions.

Description. If there is one current that runs through each part of the curriculum at South Boston Harbor Academy, it is that students must mas-

ter a core set of basic, academic skills before they can move on to master higher-level, abstract material. Before anything else, SBHA ensures that all students can move toward the same high academic standards. In order to gauge the fulfillment of their ambitious objectives, SBHA teachers input lesson plans daily into the school's internal database that connects the content and skills covered in class with the standards laid out by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. After-school and in-school tutoring are available for students having difficulty with a particular subject. Regular focus is placed on students' study and organizational skills in all academic classes.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,675,574
Per Pupil Expenditures	$10,472
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$8,683



South Boston Harbor Academy also makes use of the unique opportunity it has to use Boston Harbor as an educational tool for its students. Students and teachers draw upon the environment around the school to develop relevant lessons while increasing students' awareness and understanding of their city.

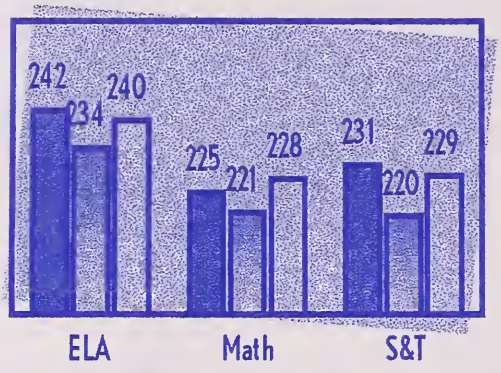
Origin. Susan Fortin and Brett Peiser were pursuing degrees in public policy at Harvard University when they met Senator Stephen Lynch, who shared their commitment to improving public education. The three came together to write a charter proposal based on their shared philosophy that "kids need to master a core set of basic academic skills in a safe learning environment in order to succeed. We believed we could make that happen."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	College prep, math/science focus
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 5-12 in 2003
Length of School Year	190 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:00
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	2,000 volumes
Computers	7:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

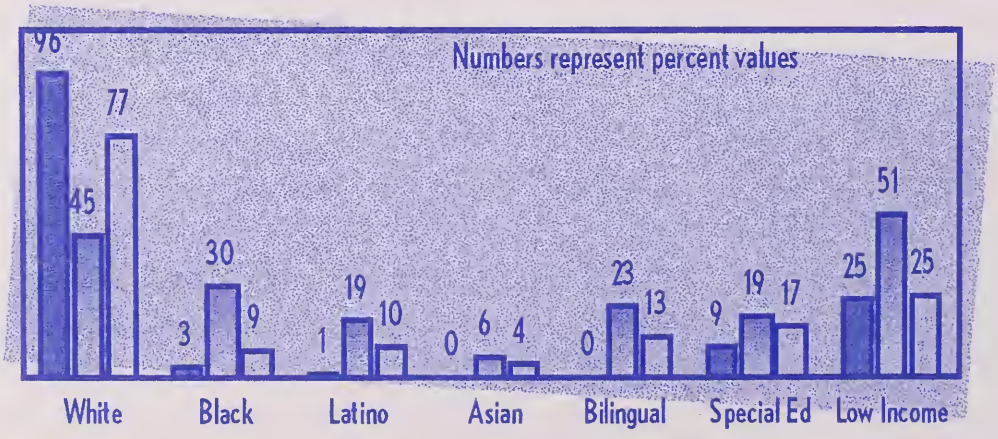
Grade 8



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students outscoring their counterparts in the surrounding districts by four points in Math, eight in English/Language Arts, and eleven in Science & Technology.

SBHA | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

Student Demographics (1999-2000)

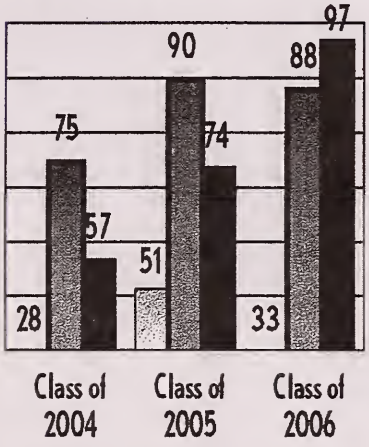


SBHA | Average of Sending Districts* | Statewide Average

All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

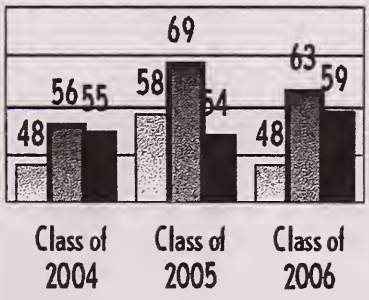
Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

Math, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



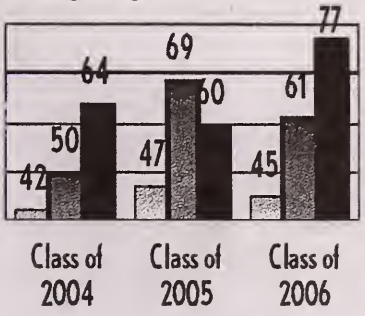
A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows every class making much greater than expected progress over the two years. All classes began at or below the national average in 1998 and ended above the national average in 2000.**

Reading, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students making less than expected progress in the Class of 2005 and greater than expected progress in the Classes of 2004 and 2006. All classes scored above the national average in 2000.

Language, Stanford-9 NCE Scores, 1998 through 2000



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the Stanford-9 shows students in every class making much greater than expected progress over the two years. All classes started below the national average in 1998 and ended above the national average in 2000.

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

** Due to the large increase in scores in the Classes of 2004 and 2006, figures for 1998 did not fit on the scaled graph.

South Shore Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Renewed in 2000

Opened	1995
Location	Hull (Regional)
Grades Served, 1999-2000	K-12
Enrollment, 1999-2000	350
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.5
In-District Transfer Rate	13.1%

School Leader: Edward Gotgart
2 A Street, Hull, MA 02045
Tel: 781 925 1689 Fax: 781 925 9830 E-mail: Egotgart@sscs-ma.org
http://www.sscs-ma.org

Mission. The mission of the South Shore Charter School is to provide each student with an education which fosters initiative, critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, and communication; to promote life skills for individual achievement in education, career, community, and life; and to disseminate our model of education across Massachusetts.

Description. South Shore Charter School uses an experiential, project-based model of learning designed to foster creative thinking and community values. The school's model is comprised of five key elements. First, every student must achieve certain academic goals in order to graduate to the next grade level. Chief among these schools is the completion of school projects designed to incorporate technology, communication, community service, and entrepreneurship into experiential lessons for students. Younger students engage in projects to serve the school community, while older students become increasingly involved in designing and directing their own projects. South Shore student projects have ranged from running a school store to

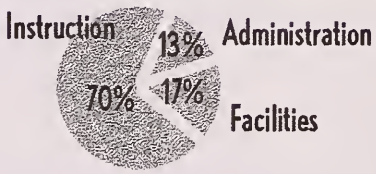
South Shore student projects have ranged from running a school store to developing brochures for the New England Wildlife Center, to helping renovate an orphanage in Bolivia.

developing brochures for the New England Wildlife Center, to helping renovate an orphanage in Bolivia.

A second key element of the school is that students study in multi-age grade levels, each of which lasts two to three years of schooling. This provides students with an opportunity for more long-term relationships with teachers. Third, school community is emphasized and students, parents, and faculty are involved in the school's governance. Fourth, all students participate in community service, providing services both to the school and to the outside community through partnerships with a variety of nonprofit organizations. Fifth, the school focuses on technology as a means of enhancing student learning.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	11:1
Average Experience	N/A

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$2,350,579
Per Pupil Expenditures	$6,716
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,342



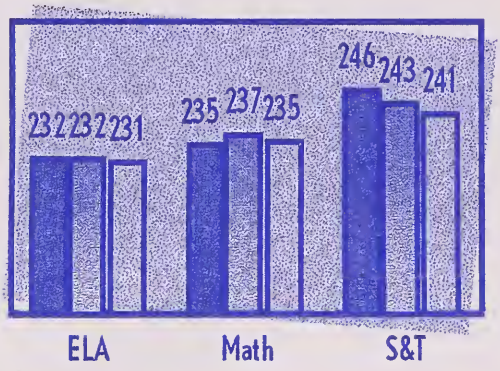
Origin. South Shore Charter School was the vision of Timothy Anderson, a consultant who, in 1989, was hired by the Hull Council for Business and Cultural Development to propose a restructuring of the public school curriculum under the town's superintendent. Unsatisfied with the progress of reform and the inflexibility within the school district, he joined with a coalition of parents, community members, educators, Massasoit Community College, and other partners to "develop a new type of public school to serve the South Shore."

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Project-based learning/Core Knowledge
Size at Full Capacity	At full size serving grades K-12
Length of School Year	189 days
Length of School Day	K-5 8:30-2:45; 6-8 8:00-3:00
School Meetings	15 per year
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	6,000 volumes
Computers	3.8:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

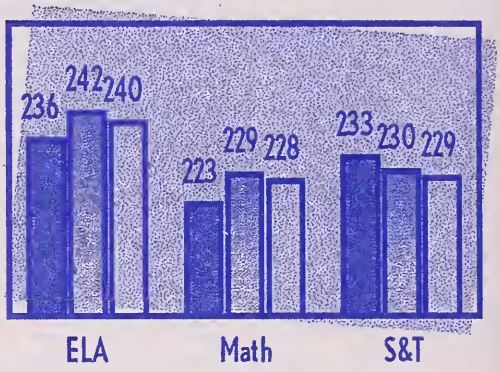
South Shore Charter School

MCAS Results (1999-2000)

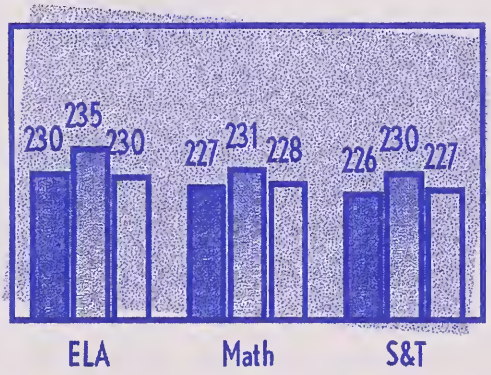
Grade 4



Grade 8

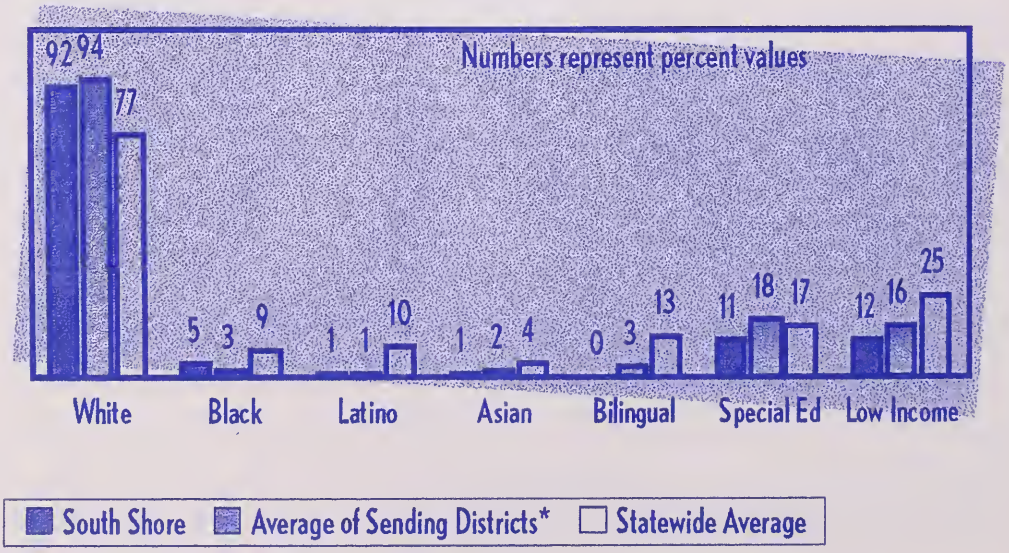


Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students slightly outperforming their counterparts from the surrounding area in Science & Technology in fourth and eighth grades. Other scores range from the same as, to five or six points below, their district counterparts.

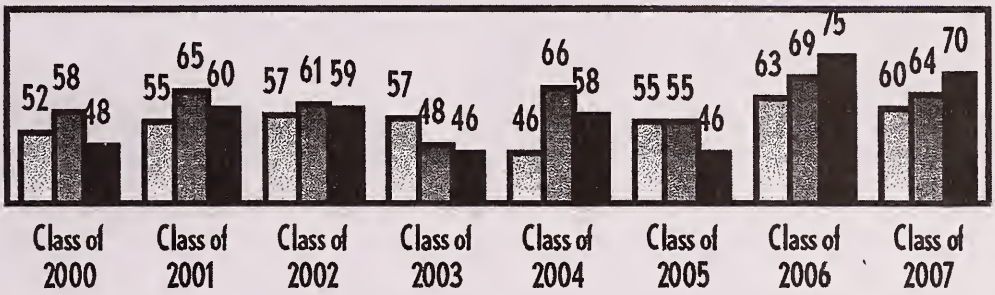
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

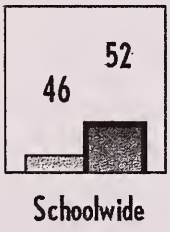
Overall, CAT NCE Scores, 1997 through 1999



A comparison of normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test shows the youngest students (Classes of 2004, 2006, and 2007) making much greater than expected progress over the two years. Students in the Classes of 2001 and 2002 also posted expected or greater than expected progress over the two years. Five of the seven classes scored above the national average in 1999.

1997 Score 1998 Score 1999 Score

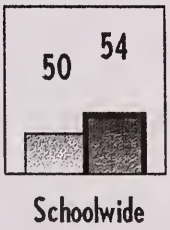
Math, CAT NCE Scores, 1997 to 1999



The school tracked individual level improvement for those students who were at the school from 1997 through 1999, using normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test. This shows greater than expected progress on math scores.

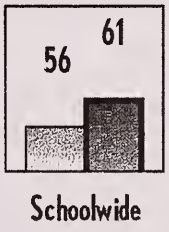
1997 Score 1999 Score

Language Scores, 1997 to 1999



Individual level improvement on normal curve equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test shows greater than expected progress.

Reading Scores, 1997 to 1999



Individual level improvement on normal cure equivalent scores on the California Achievement Test shows greater than expected progress.

1997 Score 1999 Score

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

Sturgis Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1998

Opened	1998
Location	Hyannis
Grades Served, 1999-2000	9-10
Enrollment, 1999-2000	198
Waiting List, 1999-2000	0
Application Rate, 1999-2000	1.3
In-District Transfer Rate	9.6%

School Leader: David W. Crellin
427 Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601
Tel: 508 778 1782 Fax: 508 771 6785 E-mail: eorvis@massed.net
http://www.sturgischarterschool.org

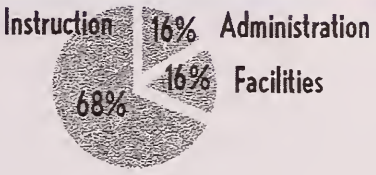
Mission. The mission of Sturgis Charter School is to prepare students to meet world-class standards of academic achievement through strategies that address the strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

Description. Sturgis Charter School opened in the Fall of 1999 with plans to offer students an intellectually rigorous education in the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences, a course of study aimed at independence of thought and generosity of spirit. All students are required to take and pass four years of each of the core disciplines: English, history, mathematics, and science, along with required coursework in French, Latin, art, and music. Instruction is designed to challenge all students to think independently, to express their thinking effectively in both speaking and writing, to learn from productive participation in small group interaction and problem-solving, and to take responsibility for everyone's learning in their classrooms by thoughtfully listening and responding to others' ideas.

Sturgis seeks to prove that a secondary school can operate on the basis of students' doing what is right not because they fear the consequences but because they have accepted the responsibility of being good citizens.

Teachers	
Student:Teacher Ratio	13:1
Average Experience	11.7 years

Spending	
Actual, 1999-2000	$1,416,938
Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,156
Average Per Pupil Tuition	$6,586



In its approach to community building, Sturgis seeks to prove that a secondary school can operate on the basis of students' doing what is right not because they fear the consequences but because they have accepted the responsibility of being good citizens. All students are expected to help serve the school with their time and energy. On average, students contribute ten hours of service a year to helping the school with such work as maintenance, tutoring, and showing the school to prospective students. Students contribute another ten hours a year in service to the broader community through a range of activities from mentoring to recycling to community cleanups. The school has never held detention, instead requiring students to reflect on and make plans for changing their behavior when they have done something wrong.

In addition to academics, students can participate in a number of extracurricular activities, including athletic teams, chorus, and a Student Action Committee.

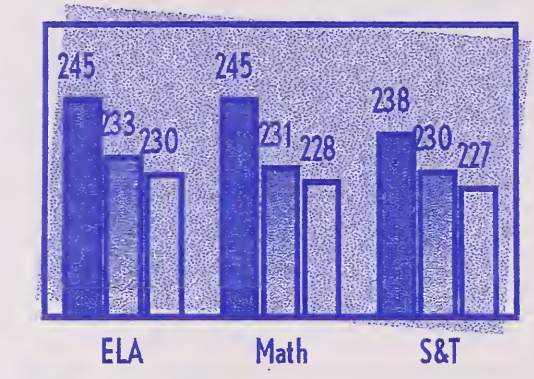
Origin. Sturgis Charter School was founded by a group of parents and citizens who were interested in providing students with the opportunity to earn an International Baccalaureate diploma.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Based on International Baccalaureate
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 9-12 in 2001
Length of School Year	187 days
Length of School Day	8:20-3:15
School Meetings	As needed
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	No library in school
Computers	50:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Sturgis Charter School

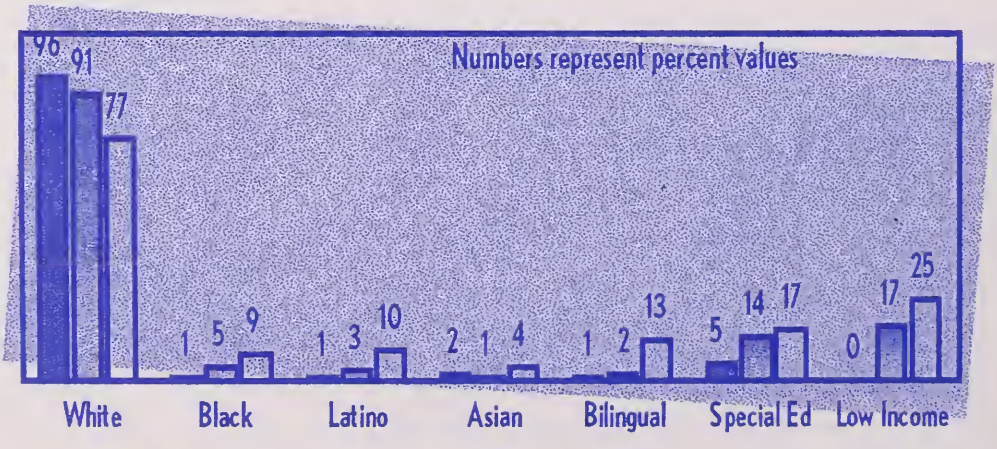
MCAS Results (1999-2000)

Grade 10



A comparison of MCAS scores shows students outperforming their counterparts in the surrounding district by eight to fourteen points.

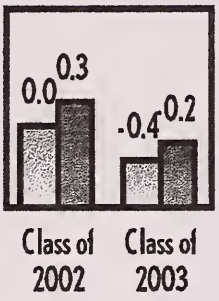
Student Demographics (1999-2000)



All data presented below is taken from the school's annual report or has been provided by the school. Touching bars of equal height show "expected" student progress over the given time period. For further detail, see chapter introduction.

Academic Progress (Reported by Graduating Class)

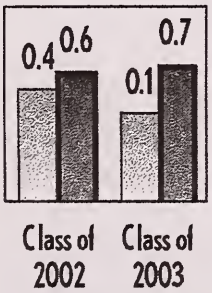
Math, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



The graph at left shows grade level equivalent scores on the Educational Development Series Standardized Test, expressed as the number of years above grade level for the class. For instance, the Class of 2002 was at grade level (0.0 years above grade level) in the Fall of 1999. A comparison shows students making expected or greater than expected growth in both classes. Students in the Class of 2003 started four months behind and ended only two months behind, while students in the Class of 2002 started at grade level and ended three months ahead of grade level.

Fall '99 Score Spring '00 Score

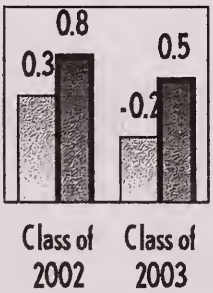
Reading, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



A comparison of grade level equivalent scores with respect to the norm shows students making expected or greater than expected growth in both classes. Students in the Class of 2002 started four months ahead and ended six months ahead, while students in the Class of 2003 started one month ahead and ended seven months ahead of grade level.

Fall '99 Score Spring '00 Score

Language, Years above Grade Level, Fall '99 to Spring '00



A comparison of grade level equivalent scores with respect to the norm shows students making expected or greater than expected growth in both classes. Students in the Class of 2002 started three months ahead and ended eight months ahead, while students in the Class of 2003 started two months behind and ended five months ahead of grade level.

Fall '99 Score Spring '00 Score

* District average is based on the values from the districts in which the charter school's students reside, weighted to reflect the makeup of the student body.

7 New Charter School Profiles

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

New School Profiles: An Introduction

The previous chapter provided a profile of each of the 37 schools operating in Massachusetts during the 1999-2000. In addition to these 37, there are eleven more charters held in Massachusetts. Three were granted in 1999 for schools that opened in the Fall of 2000. One was granted a charter in 2000 and is planning to open in the Fall of 2001. Seven more were granted charters in March of 2001 and will open in the next two school years.

These schools represent the continued growth of the charter school initiative in Massachusetts. For eight of the eleven, the school remains an idea—no building, no children, no staff at work, just designs to be made and plans to be built upon. Three of the eleven, currently face the challenge of what is often the most difficult period in the life of a charter school: its first year of operation, turning ideas into reality.

"Plankton Watercolors," collaborative mural by the sixth grade, Cape Cod Lighthouse.

Academy of Strategic Learning Charter School

Horace Mann Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2001
Location	Amesbury
Grades Served, 2001-02	7-10
Expected Enrollment, 2001-02	25
Grades Served at Full Capacity	7-12

School Contact: Joan Landers
Tel: 978 388 0531 Fax: 978 388 7224
E-Mail: jlanders@ci.amesbury.ma.us

Mission. The Academy of Strategic Learning Charter School will exhibit unconditional commitment to every child, ensuring that all students experience success through the development of attitudes and skills necessary for life-long learning by providing the highest quality staff, meaningful learning experiences, and a vitally involved community. Its goals include high academic achievement as well as mastery of the skills needed to become workers, parents, and citizens in a democratic society.

Description. The Academy will focus on meeting the needs of at-risk youth in the Amesbury area by focusing on four curriculum themes: career awareness, social development, strategic learning, and the arts. Students will develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills necessary to become independent life-long learners. Every student will have an Individualized Learning Plan, highlighting that student's target areas of need.

Founders of the Academy of Strategic Learning include the city's mayor and schools superintendent, who hope the school will help at-risk students meet high standards.

Origin. The Academy of Strategic Learning was founded by a diverse group of Amesbury residents, including the city's mayor and superintendent of schools. With a dropout rate of 16 percent and a high number of students at risk, the founders of the school sought to design an environment that would help those students meet high academic standards.

Codman Academy Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2001
Location	Boston
Grade Served, 2001-02	9
Expected Enrollment, 2001-02	32
Grades Served at Full Capacity	9-12

School Contact: Meg Campbell
Tel: 617 822 8144 Fax: 617 287 9064
E-Mail: codmanacademy@codman.org

Mission. Codman Academy Charter School's mission is to prepare students for full participation in the intellectual, economic, and civic life of our society by ensuring their preparation and access to further education, the skills and vision to undertake a rewarding career, and the motivation and character needed to engage deeply and productively in community life.

Description. In collaboration with Codman Square Health Center, Codman Academy Charter School will offer students project-based learning, drawing field sites from Boston combined with internet-based distance learning. The school's program will focus on mastery of content disciplines through the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) approach, as well as on-line courses provided through Virtual High School. The oldest on-line academy at the pre-college level, Virtual High School offers 150 courses to over 3,000 students worldwide. In addition, the Concord Consortium Educational Technology Lab, purveyors of the Virtual High School, is launching the Virtual Academy of Math and Science through which Codman Academy students will be able to take college-level mathematics and science courses.

Codman Academy's program will use the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) approach, as well as on-line courses provided through Virtual High School.

Origin. Codman Academy was founded by a partnership of educators and leaders of Codman Square Health Center, a nonprofit organization meeting the needs of residents of surrounding Dorchester. The group saw the need to provide local parents with a small school to prepare their children to pursue higher education.

Edward Brooke Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2002
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 2002-03	5-6
Expected Enrollment, 2002-03	120
Grades Served at Full Capacity	5-12

School Contact: Brett Peiser
Tel: 617 269 7557 Fax: 617 269 7553
E-mail: bpeiser@sbha.org

Mission. The mission of Edward Brooke Charter School is to provide an academically rigorous public education to students from the city of Boston that will ensure that they are prepared to succeed in college. The school's secondary goal is to ensure that students are equipped with the political, economic, and financial tools to be active decision-makers in the public policy decisions that affect their lives.

Description. Named for the first African American U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, EBCS proposes to combine a grounding in economics and public policy studies with a focus on the attainment of fundamental skills in science, mathematics, English, history, and French or Spanish.

Students will complete comprehensive semiannual projects that incorporate academic study with a local, state, or national public policy issue.

Students will complete comprehensive semiannual projects that incorporate academic study with a local, state, or national public policy issue. EBCS will use the city of Boston as an important resource for education outside the classroom. Mentoring relationships will match students will individuals from the public and private sectors. The school will use a set of clearly defined standards in each academic area. Students will integrate information technology and computer programming into their course of study. Most importantly, the school will ensure that students are equipped with the academic skills they need to succeed in and graduate from a four-year college.

Origin. Designed by a group of educators from South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School, Edward Brooke Charter School seeks to prepare Boston students for a college education, as well as a professional world that is fast requiring heightened academic, social, and practical skills.

Framingham Community Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2002
Location	Framingham
Grade Served, 2002-03	6
Expected Enrollment, 2002-03	102
Grades Served at Full Capacity	6-8

School Contact: Michael Delman
Tel: 508 662 0285 Fax: 508 270 6326

Mission. Framingham Community Charter School seeks to cultivate within each member of a diverse student body an intense commitment to self and community, the courage and insight to set high standards for academic and personal success, and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve those standards. It seeks to graduate students who question common assumptions and investigate problems critically and have the discipline and resourcefulness to achieve their goals.

Description. Framingham Community Charter School intends to push students to think deeply about issues and to learn though experience and exploration. The school's educational approach centers on acquiring skills and knowledge through learning expeditions—long-term, in-depth investigations of content areas using research, projects, fieldwork, and adventure. The school will use these learning expeditions to keep students involved in their education, and to develop proficiency in mathematics, English, history, science, and technology. In the process, students will apply their knowledge in solving real life problems for which there are no easy pre-ordained solutions.

Through learning expeditions, students will apply their knowledge in solving real life problems for which there are no easy pre-ordained solutions.

Origin. Framingham Community Charter School was founded by a group committed to the principles and ideas underlying outdoor, experiential education. "We wanted to combine the relevance of a hands-on program," one of the school's founders explains, "with the reflectiveness and intellectual rigor that a public school could provide."

Frederick Douglass Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1999

Opened	2000
Location	Boston
Grades Served, 2000-01	5-6
Enrollment, 2000-01	102
Waiting List, 2000-01	42

School Leader: James Bower
1286 Hyde Park Avenue, Hyde Park, MA 02136
Tel: 617 333 7400 Fax: 617 333 7404

Mission. The mission of Frederick Douglass Charter School is to foster pride in academic achievement by requiring public demonstration of work in every subject area. Based on the belief that to explain one's idea is to own it, students will learn to clarify their ideas through the process of research, writing, revision, and presentation.

Description. At Frederick Douglass Charter School, students are taught through direct instruction, cooperative learning, and repeated opportunities to demonstrate achievement in a public setting. The program includes a variety of innovative elements to give students practice in public speaking: guest speakers and researchers from the community give presentations on a regular basis; students publish work on the Internet, in community newspapers, and in school displays; and students have a number of opportunities for public speaking in extracurricular programs. Graduating students will be required to present oral reports to the entire school community.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	College-prep / Public speaking focus
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 6-12 in 2007
Length of School Year	186 days
Length of School Day	8:00-3:30
School Meetings	Weekly
Student Dress Code	Uniforms
Library	No in-school library
Computers	6:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Origin. The school grew out of the Steppingstone Magnet Program, a rigorous academic program to prepare underserved school children for Boston's public exam schools. "We saw the charter school movement," one founder explains, "as an opportunity to respond to the high demand among Boston families for more college-preparatory alternatives within the public schools."

Holyoke Community Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2002
Location	Holyoke
Grades Served, 2002-03	K-5
Expected Enrollment, 2002-03	624
Grades Served at Full Capacity	K-8

School Contact: Betty Lichtenstein
Tel: 413 532 9300 Fax: 413 552 3991
E-mail: betty@hfn.org

Mission. Holyoke Community Charter School's mission is to promote the joy of learning and to prepare a broad cross-section of Holyoke children for success as students, workers, and citizens by providing them with a high-quality public education. The school plans to create curriculum, programs, and activities that reflect the rich cultural diversity of the Holyoke community.

Description. Holyoke Community Charter School will implement the Edison school design, a research-based, standards-driven academic program. Based on this design, the school will be organized into a Primary, an Elementary, and a Junior Academy, using a curriculum built around five domains: humanities and the arts, mathematics and science, character and ethics, practical arts and skills, and health and physical fitness.

Reflecting the expected diversity of its student body, the school's educational strategies combine academic programming with efforts to foster an understanding of different cultures.

Reflecting the expected diversity of its student body, the school's educational strategies combine academic programming with efforts to foster an understanding of different cultures, and provides instruction to students in both English and Spanish.

Origin. Holyoke Community Charter School was founded by members of Enlace de Familias, a local group principally involved in community organizing and education. "We wanted to enhance the options available to the Holyoke community," says one founder, "with a school that was responsive to the diverse needs of the area's minority population, and to the technological demands of society."

Lowell Community Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1999

School Leader: Ramon Alvarez
206 Jackson Street , Lowell, MA 01852
Tel: 978 323 0800 Fax: 978 323 4600
E-mail: reng@lowellccs.org

Opened	2000
Location	Lowell
Grades Served, 2000-01	K-3
Enrollment, 2000-01	295
Waiting List, 2000-01	0

Mission. The mission of the Lowell Community Charter School is to prepare a diverse cross-section of Lowell children for success as students, citizens, and workers by providing them with a comprehensive curriculum in a supportive, challenging, multicultural learning environment.

Description. Based in a community with a large immigrant population, Lowell Community Charter Schools places unique emphasis on the history of immigrants in America and on the culture, language and experience of the Southeast Asian and Latino peoples who comprise a substantial portion of Lowell's present day population. All students pursue either Spanish or Khmer as a second language, beginning in Kindergarten, and all students develop proficient English language skills.

School Overview	
Curricular Philosophy	Bilingual emphasis
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades K-12 in 2009
Length of School Year	185 days
Length of School Day	8:00am - 4:00pm
School Meetings	Weekly all-school meetings
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	In development
Computers	4:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Beacon Educational Management, Inc.

Origin. Guided by their belief that "opportunities for quality learning must be extended to all children on an equal opportunity basis," a group of community leaders in Lowell set out to found a school that would provide that opportunity for the immigrant population of their city.

Media and Technology Charter High (MATCH)

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 1999

School Leaders: Michael Goldstein and Charles Sposato
1187 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446
Tel: 617 232 0300 Fax: 617 232 2838
http://www.matchschool.org

Opened	2000
Location	Boston
Grade Served, 2000-01	9
Enrollment, 2000-01	76
Waiting List, 2000-01	185

Mission. The mission of Media and Technology Charter High (MATCH) is to prepare inner-city teenagers for college by deeply engaging students with their coursework through an extended day program that encourages the creation of curriculum-based projects using all forms of media and internet technology.

Description. Students at the MATCH School study the core disciplines of math, science, English, and history, using media and technology as tools for learning. The school aims to pioneer the most efficient, thoughtful use of media—ranging from film and video to journalism, animation, photography, and radio—in core subjects. The MATCH curriculum is designed to use technology as a pedagogical strategy to captivate, fascinate and teach students. MATCH students engage in project-based learning through the production of documentaries, websites, and photo essays. All students are required to engage in community service as a way of "de-isolating" students from the surrounding community.

School Overview

Curricular Philosophy	College prep with media/tech focus
Size at Full Capacity	Will serve grades 9-12 in 2003
Length of School Year	180 days
Length of School Day	MWTh 8:30-4:30; T 8:30-12; F 8:30-3
School Meetings	Twice per year
Student Dress Code	No strict dress code
Library	No in-school library
Computers	1:1 student:computer ratio
Management Contract	Self managed

Origin. The MATCH School was founded by a team of educators, business executives, community leaders, and media professionals. "We wanted to create an inner-city school with a small environment where various projects would be closely tied into 'the basics,'" explains founder Michael Goldstein.

New Bedford Global Learning Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2000

Opening	2001
Location	New Bedford
Grades Served, 2001-02	6-9
Expected Enrollment	216
Grades Served at Full Capacity	6-12

School Contact: Vivian Guilfoy
Tel: 617 618 2310 Fax: 617 332 4318

Mission. New Bedford Global Learning Charter School aims to have *all* students achieve academic excellence and master essential skills needed for a productive life in the new century. Academic excellence is defined as demonstrated proficiency in state and district standards in the subject areas of mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies; essential skills for mastery are career awareness, global citizenship, technology literacy, and life skills. The school will also serve as a citywide education research and dissemination center that helps New Bedford develop new approaches to learning.

Description. Believing that all students learn and develop to their potential in a well designed and managed school, New Bedford Global Learning Charter School will strive to provide relevant curriculum and learning experiences. In order to foster leadership and an ability to maneuver the challenges of the 21st century, the school will integrate cross-cutting themes—career awareness, global citizenship, technological literacy, and life skills—into the teaching of the core subjects of mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. Visual and performing arts will also be taught within the context of the school's cross-cutting themes, and students will be encouraged to pursue internships in the arts.

The New Bedford School District sought to develop a laboratory school that would help the district determine how to reduce dropout rates and improve test scores.

Origin. Facing high school dropout rates of 40 percent and high failure rates on the MCAS exam, the New Bedford School District sought to develop a laboratory school that would assist the entire district in determining how to reduce dropout rates and improve test scores.

North Central Charter Essential School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

Opening	2002
Location	Fitchburg (Regional)
Grades Served, 2002-03	7-9
Expected Enrollment, 2002-03	240
Grades Served at Full Capacity	7-12

School Contact: Peter Garbus
Tel: 978 368 0547
E-mail: pgarbus@massed.net

Mission. North Central Charter Essential School aims to bring together a diverse group of students from urban, suburban, and rural communities and to help each and every one of them learn to use their minds well. The school seeks to provide a personalized learning experience as well as a place where students learn by doing and demonstrate their knowledge and skills through exhibitions. The school's highest priority is to graduate students who possess developed intellectual abilities, a strong sense of identity and confidence, and a sense of leadership and community.

The school seeks to provide a personalized learning experience as well as a place where students learn by doing and demonstrate their knowledge and skills through exhibitions.

Description. North Central Charter Essential School plans to use clear academic standards that will center on essential knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that all students can know and internalize. Emphasizing big concepts, key ideas, defining moments, rich texts, and foundation documents, the school will follow a "less is more" approach to determining what content is essential to learning. More than content understanding, the school will work to help all students develop literacy and numeracy, thinking skills such as problem-solving, investigation, communication, and critical thinking, as well as personal skills including leadership, a spirit of action, open-mindedness with skepticism, autonomy, collaboration, self-confidence, awareness, and active listening.

Origin. North Central was started by a small group of parents and educators affiliated with the Francis W. Parker School. "This was an opportunity to expand what we saw working at Parker and other Coalition of Essential model schools around the country," explains one of the school's founders.

Northern Bristol County Regional Charter School

Commonwealth Charter Granted in 2001

School Contact: Matthew DiMarco
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Opening	2002
Location	Attleboro (Regional)
Grades Served, 2002-03	K-6
Expected Enrollment, 2002-03	519
Grades Served at Full Capacity	K-8

Mission. The mission of Northern Bristol County Regional Charter School is to educate all students to their maximum potential. The school will use a project-based approach and incorporate rigorous academics and technology, enabling students to acquire the skills necessary to become positive, productive contributors to society.

Description. Northern Bristol County Regional Charter School will design its curriculum to combine the rigor of Core Knowledge with the interdisciplinary understanding of project-based learning. The school has partnered with Beacon Education Management to provide the Beacon Lightpoints Curriculum, an outcomes-based curriculum woven from national standards. This curriculum uses New Standards for English/Language Arts, National History Standards and Geography Education National Implementation for history and geography, and will draw from Beacon's national database to create standards for Technology, World Language, Health, and the Arts.

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Origin. Northern Bristol County Regional Charter School was founded by a group of community and business leaders brought together by their commitment to school choice. "Education is a passion of ours," explains a founding member. "It is something we firmly believe should be provided to every family in the Commonwealth, and we decided we should do something about it."

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